EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT ASSASSINS

Vince HERNANDEZ
Jordan GUNDERSON
Teodoro GONZALEZ
Josh REED

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COVER A

Executive Assistant: Assassins

Vince Hernandez
Jordan Gunderson
Teodoro Gonzalez
Josh Reed

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Cover B

The story so far...

They are raised from their youth with strict obedience and brutally trained to protect and serve their respective masters with discipline, loyalty and often times violence, if necessary. They are the Executive Assistants.

EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT: ASSASSINS

[LIFE AFTER DEATH]

PART 1 OF 3

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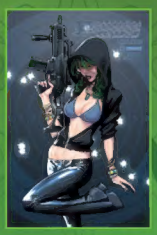

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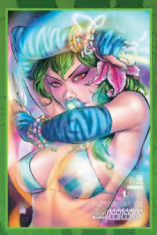

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XINJIANG, CHINA.
WHEN I FIRST RECEIVED MY FLOWER NAME FROM MY HEADMASTER SHUJI AS A YOUNG GIRL, I CHERISHED THE MEANING OF THE LILY. IT SYMBOLIZED PURITY OF HEART AND VIRTUE.
AND VIRTUOUS I WAS... AT FIRST. I REIGNED AT THE TOP OF MY CLASS. UNTIL, A FIERCE GIRL NAMED IRIS SHOWED UP.
WHAT KIND OF FLOWER IS IT?*
DON'T TOUCH IT, DANDELION! IF THE HEADMASTER FINDS OUT, WE'LL BE WASHING THE CELLAR FLOOR FOR WEEKS!
SMACK
THEN, I LEARNED ABOUT FAILURE...
*TRANSLATED FROM MANDARIN.
BUT IT'S SO PRETTY!
IT DOESN'T MATTER. IT DOESN'T BELONG TO US. YOU KNOW THE RULES.
YES, YES-- I KNOW. THIEVERY IS A MARK OF WEAKNESS BLAH, BLAH, BLAH. BUT IT'S JUST A FLOWER, CAMELLIA!
IT BELONGS TO THE SCHOOL, JUST LIKE US. WE ARE THE PROPERTY OF THE HEADMASTER UNTIL OUR PURCHASE-- OR WOULD YOU RATHER END UP LIKE A FAILURE. LIKE BLOSSOM-- OR WORSE YET-- LILY?!
...I LEARNED ABOUT LOSS...
SHHH! CAMELLIA! IF THE HEADMASTER HEARS US SAY THAT NAME, SHE'LL WHIP US GOOD!
NOW YOU CARE ABOUT THE RULES.
C'MON. LET'S GET BACK BEFORE WE'RE IN EVEN MORE TROUBLE.
...BUT, MOST IMPORTANTLY...

SHINJUKU DISTRICT, JAPAN.
...I LEARNED WHAT IT FEELS LIKE TO BE DEAD.

HEY, GIRL! WHY DON'T YOU COME DOWN OFF THAT STAGE AND LET ME SHOW YOU THE MEANING OF A GOOD TIME?*
THAT'S WHAT I HAD TO LEARN ON MY OWN. WHAT THEY DON'T TEACH YOU IN EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT ACADEMY.
HOW TO SURVIVE ON YOUR OWN-- ONCE YOU ARE ALONE.
CRAAAAK
IT'S A WHOLE NEW WORLD AT THAT POINT. ONE WE'RE FORCED TO LEARN QUICKLY...
*TRANSLATED FROM JAPANESE.
I'LL MAKE YOU SCREAM FOR THAT, GIRL!
...OR DIE.
YOU'RE NOT THE FIRST MAN TO TRY.

I'M USED TO FIGHTING MEN.
NEVER MET ONE THAT HASN'T ABUSED ME IN SOME WAY-- PHYSICALLY... OR EMOTIONALLY.
CRAKK
ONE AT A TIME, OR ALL AT ONCE?
SO-- I'VE ALWAYS FOUGHT BACK.
GET A HOLD OF HER!
UNNNGH!
HRRRGHHH!
THUNK
MEN ARE EASY, IN MANY WAYS.
THEY WEAR THEIR EMOTIONS ON THEIR SLEEVES.

MY FORMER EMPLOYER-- OR MASTER, IF YOU WILL-- WAS A SIMILAR MAN THIS WAY.
TAKEO ALWAYS SHOWED HIS HAND FIRST. HIS PRIDE ALWAYS GOT THE BETTER OF HIM. IT WAS HIS GREATEST VULNERABILITY.
LOOKS LIKE IT'S JUST YOU AND--
--GRGGGGGGGH!
WHOOSH
IT'S HOW I WAS ABLE TO GET THE UPPER HAND ON HIM AND KILL HIM, AND FREE MYSELF FROM HIS BULLSHIT.
BUT, EVEN WITH MY MASTER GONE, TROUBLE ALWAYS HAS A WAY OF FINDING ME.

LATER...
DANCERS ONLY
WHAT THE F*%K AM I SUPPOSED TO DO WITH YOU, LILY? YOU KNOW WHAT IT'S GONNA COST TO MAKE THIS MESS GO AWAY?!
I'M SORRY, KYO, REALLY. I COULDN'T HELP MYSELF. IT JUST HAPPENED SO QUICKLY.
YOU NEVER CAN HELP YOURSELF! BUT WHY?! WHY CAN'T YOU JUST... CONTROL YOURSELF?!
I... I DON'T KNOW, OKAY. IT'S JUST... THE WAY I AM.
WELL, YOU KNOW YOU'RE FIRED. YOU NEED TO GO. YOU CAN STAY AS LONG AS YOU'D LIKE TONIGHT, BUT TOMORROW, I DON'T EVER WANNA SEE YOU AROUND HERE AGAIN, GOT IT?
KYO, PLEASE--
SLAM
-SIGH-

HE'S RIGHT. I CAN'T HELP MYSELF. I WOULDN'T EVEN KNOW WHERE TO START.
AFTER I KILLED TAKEO, I TEAMED UP WITH IRIS. TOOK DOWN SHUJI AND EVENTUALLY THAT PIECE OF SHIT POWER MONGER VILLONE AS WELL.*
*SEE EA IRIS VOLUME TWO FOR DETAILS.
FOR A BRIEF WHILE, I HAD PURPOSE.
NOW...
...THE DEMONS OF MY PAST HAVE RETURNED...
...AND TAKEN WHAT'S LEFT OF MY PRESENT.

TOKYO, JAPAN.
SHE'S IN THE SHINJUKU DISTRICT, WORKING AS A DANCER.
YOU'VE WITNESSED THIS YOURSELF?
IN THE FLESH, SIR. SHE TOOK OUT A FEW MISBEHAVING PATRONS LAST NIGHT AS I SAT AND WATCHED.
SHE SAW YOUR FACE? HAVE I TAUGHT YOU NOTHING ABOUT SURVEILLANCE TACTICS?
IT WAS UNAVOIDABLE *MAZUTSU*, I ASSURE YOU. BUT I HAVE THE SITUATION UNDER CONTROL. ALL OF TAKEO'S ASSETS WILL BE ELIMINATED-- INCLUDING HER-- TRUST ME.
YOU KNOW ME WELL ENOUGH TO KNOW I TRUST NO ONE.
WHATEVER SHE KNOWS-- ENDS WITH HER LIFE. UNDERSTOOD?
DO NOT UNDERESTIMATE THE RESILIENCE OF AN EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT. GET IT DONE. AND DO IT QUICKLY.
UNDERSTOOD.
EXCELLENT. NOW, COME, SEE MY LATEST TOY.

MAGNIFICENT, IS IT NOT, GENTLEMEN?
IMPRESSIVE.
THE PREDATOR DRONE VX. THE NEXT GENERATION IN SURVEILLANCE AND ATTACK WARFARE.
AMAZING. EVERY GOVERNMENT WILL WANT ONE.
AND THEY CAN HAVE IT--
--FOR THE *RIGHT* PRICE. ITS CAPABILITIES-- LIKE OUR COMPANY--
--REMAIN LIGHT YEARS AHEAD OF ANYTHING CURRENTLY ACTIVE IN THE WAR THEATRES ACROSS THE GLOBE.
IT IS A GAME CHANGER THEY *ALL* WILL SEEK TO GAIN.
HAS IT BEEN FIELD TESTED?
ALL IN DUE TIME, KAITO.

XINJIANG. THE EA ACADEMY. THE NEXT MORNING.
MR. TARVER, IT IS A PLEASURE TO FINALLY MAKE YOUR ACQUAINTANCE.
I AM LILAC, THE ACADEMY'S HEADMASTER. WELCOME TO OUR SCHOOL.
THE PLEASURE IS MINE, MADAM. MY PEOPLE TELL ME YOUR ACADEMY IS THE FINEST IN CHINA.
CLEARLY, YOUR SOURCES ARE KNOWLEDGEABLE ON THE SUBJECT OF EXECUTIVE ASSISTANTS, THEN. PLEASE, ALLOW ME TO SHOW YOU FIRSTHAND.
THIS IS OUR MAIN COURTYARD, WHERE THE STUDENTS ARE TRAINED IN THE REQUISITE MARTIAL ARTS STUDIES AS WELL AS SURVIVAL TACTICS, FIELD DISPLAYS, ETC. ALL OF THE TOOLS NEEDED TO SERVE AND PROTECT THEIR MASTER.
AND THIS IS THE TEA ROOM. WHERE OUR GIRLS ARE TAUGHT OF THE FINER SPECIALTIES REQUIRED FOR THEIR SERVICE.
THE FORMALITIES OF UPPER CLASS, OF COURSE.
WHO IS THAT GIRL OVER THERE?
THAT IS OUR YOUNGEST STUDENT, DANDELION. CARE FOR AN INTRODUCTION?

DANDELION. HERE-- NOW.
SHE IS PRONE TO SUCCUMBING TO HER NERVES AT THE MOMENT-- BUT WE TRUST SHE WILL GROW INTO HER ROLE QUITE WELL. YOUNG LADY, WHAT DO WE SAY TO A GUEST OF THE ACADEMY?
IT IS AN HONOR... SIR.
DO NOT BE AFRAID, DANDELION. THAT IS A WONDERFUL CHOICE OF FLOWER TITLE. I'M SURE YOU WILL GROW TO HONOR IT WITH EXCELLENCE.
UM... THANK YOU, SIR.
VERY WELL, DANDELION. YOU MAY RETURN TO YOUR ETIQUETTE DRILLS.
SO, MR. TARVER, WE ARE FULLY CAPABLE OF SUSTAINING YOUR REQUISITE NEEDS FOR AN EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT. MAY I SHOW YOU TO OUR ELDER CLASS, THE ONES CLOSER TO GRADUATION?
ABSOLUTELY, BUT FIRST, WOULD YOU BE SO KIND AS TO ELABORATE ON SOME OF YOUR PAST PUPILS-- PRIMARILY THE TRANSFER STUDENT ISSUED THE MONIKER... LILY?
UH-- YES, OF COURSE. IT'S TRAGIC REALLY, NOT ALL OF OUR STUDENTS REACH THE PRECIPITOUS HEIGHTS WE'VE SET FORTH FOR THEM AS GOALS. SOME-- AS IN LILY'S CASE-- FAIL TO REACH SAID AMBITION. WE WERE FORTUNATE TO FIND A CLIENT WILLING TO TAKE HER ON AT DISCOUNT. AFTER SHE LEFT US, I'M AFRAID, I CANNOT SHED ANY FURTHER LIGHT ON HER ACTIONS.
AH, I SEE. UNFORTUNATE.
BUT, THIS IS CERTAINLY NOT NEWS TO YOU, I IMAGINE, CONSIDERING YOUR OBVIOUS WEALTH OF KNOWLEDGE AND INSIGHT--
--AND POWER. COME NOW, LET US VISIT WITH OUR MORE EXPERIENCED GIRLS.

SHINJUKU. THE NEXT MORNING.
ZZZZZ...
WHAT TAYA GOT IN HERE?
WHAT?!?
GET, THE F#%K OFF ME!
-YAAAAWN-
I BARELY HAVE ENOUGH FOR BUS FARE HOME.
-SIGH-
HOME, SWEET HOME, THAT IS.

YOU'RE PAST DUE-- AGAIN. YOUR STUFF IS BACK IN THE ALLEY, WE TOOK THE LIBERTY OF BOXING IT FOR YOU.
SERIOUSLY? YOU COULDN'T JUST WAIT, AND LET ME GATHER MY OWN $HIT?
YOU COME AND GO AT ALL HOURS OF THE NIGHT, LADY. NO TELLING WHEN YOU'D COME BACK. TOUGH LUCK.
BITCH.
THIS IS THE PLACE, KAITO...
NEED A ROOM? ONE JUST OPENED UP.
I RECOGNIZE THE FACE FROM LAST NIGHT.
OH...

...F#%K!
BANG
I'VE NEVER MET HIM BEFORE, BUT THAT'S NEVER STOPPED SOMEONE FROM TRYING TO KILL ME.
KRAAAAASH
BUT, I KNOW ENOUGH TO TRUST MY INSTINCTS. IF SOMETHING FEELS WRONG, MY ACTIONS KICK IN.
YOU TWO-- FOLLOW HER!
AND THIS TIME, NOT A MOMENT TOO SOON.

WELL, THEY DON'T SEEM IN THE MOOD TO TALK IT OUT, THAT'S FOR SURE.
SHE WENT THIS WAY! COME ON!
GUESS A GOOD OLD-FASHIONED ASS KICKING WILL SUFFICE.
$HIT!
FWAP
THUMP
WAIT UP, MAN! WHERE DID YOU GO--?
KRAAK
THIS WILL HELP.
BANG

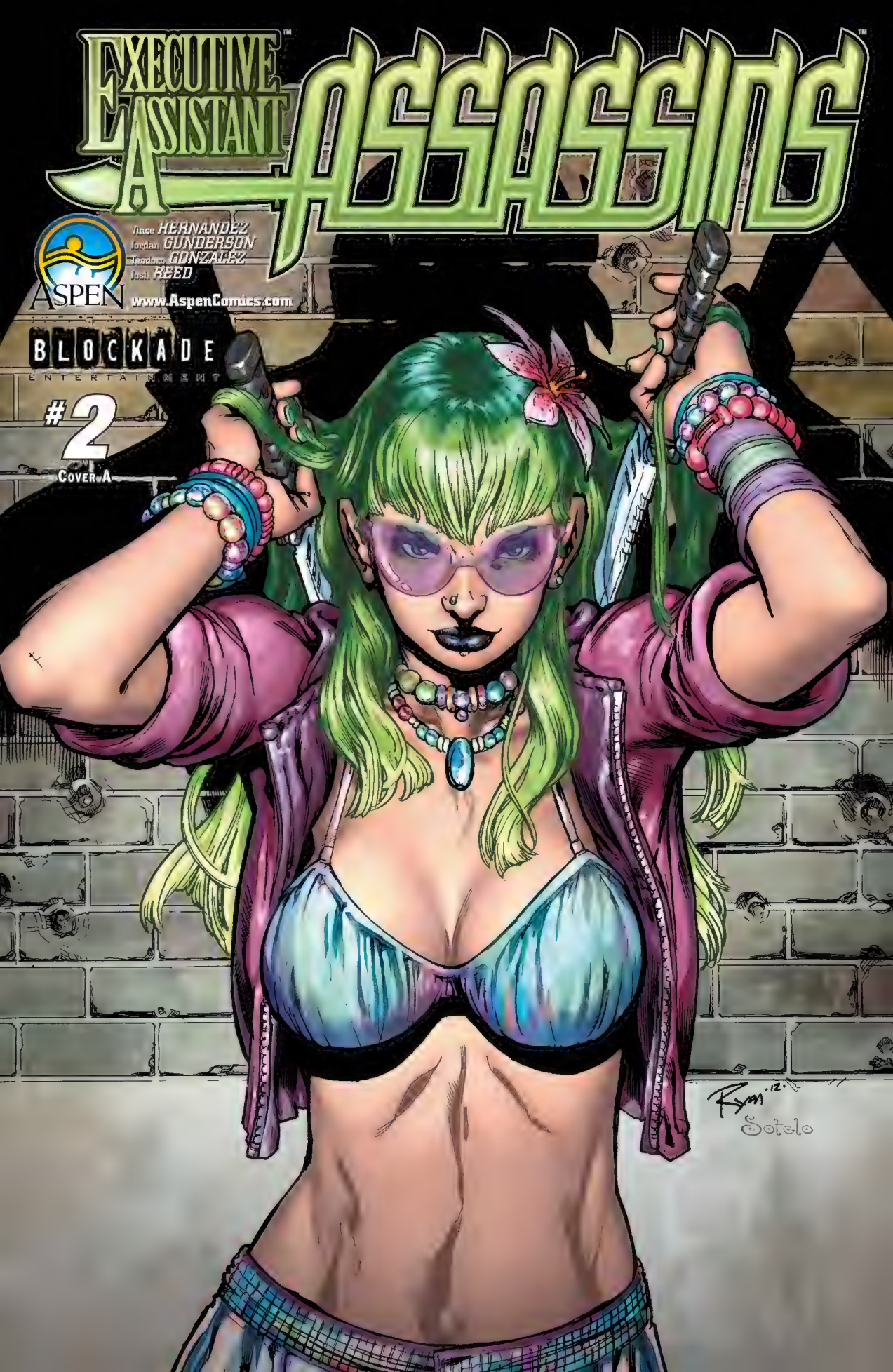
WHOEVER'S AFTER ME REALLY SENT A WHOLE PARTY. IT'S FLATTERING, REALLY.
DON'T LET HER ESCAPE!
OUT OF BREATH. I KNOW WHY, OF COURSE, BUT I CAN'T LET IT SLOW ME DOWN.
EVEN AT HALF SPEED AND COMING DOWN FROM A HIGH, I CAN STILL OUTRUN THESE MORON--
THUNK
THUD
I HAD HEARD SO MUCH ABOUT YOU EXECUTIVE ASSISTANTS, I EXPECTED MORE OF A CHALLENGE.
MY BOSS, MAZUTSU, HAS A MESSAGE FOR YOU. YOU'RE COMING WITH US.

TOKYO, JAPAN.
OUT ON THE BALCONY, TARVER.
SO, WE GOT HER?
EXCELLENT WORK, KAITO. REMEMBER TO MAINTAIN EXTREME CAUTION WITH HER. THEY ARE HIGHLY TRAINED IN THE ART OF ESCAPE.
CALL ME WHEN IT'S FINISHED.
INDEED. APPARENTLY, THE CHALLENGE WASN'T QUITE AS DIFFICULT AS WE EXPECTED.
AND WHAT OF YOUR ASSIGNMENT IN CHINA?
IT'S THERE. THE ACADEMY IS FULLY OPERATIONAL. THE HEADMASTER, LILAC, GAVE ME A PERSONAL TOUR OF THE GROUNDS.
FUTURE GENERATIONS ARE BEING GROOMED AS WE SPEAK.

THE EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT ACADEMY.
IT'S SO BEAUTIFUL. IT WAS WORTH THE RISK SNEAKING OUT TO SEE IT.
IS THIS SUNSET AS GORGEOUS AS THE MAN YOU MET TODAY IN ETIQUETTE? MR. TARVER?
SHHH! DON'T MAKE FUN! I DON'T WANT TO GET MY HOPES UP, BUT HE WAS SOOO HANDSOME, CAMELLIA! I HOPE HE CHOOSES ME! I WOULD SERVE HIM EVER SO DUTIFULLY!
IT SHOULD BE ANY MINUTE NOW. THE BIRD'S ALREADY IN THE SKY.
WELL DONE, TARVER--
--THESE EXECUTIVE ASSISTANTS HAVE BECOME A LIABILITY TO OUR APPROACHES IN THE MIDDLE EAST AND ASIA.
I CANNOT CONTINUE TO ALLOW THEIR INTERFERENCE. SIMPLY REMOVING THE SNAKE'S HEAD WON'T DO ANYMORE. WE MUST START AT THE BODY.
I KNOW YOU THINK THIS MEASURE IS EXTREME, BUT I MUST LOOK TO THE FUTURE-- AND FUTURE THREATS TO GUARD AGAINST-- TO PROTECT THE INTERESTS OF OUR ORGANIZATION. IT IS MY RESPONSIBILITY...

...NO MATTER WHAT THE COST.
MOVE.
LIKE I SAID BEFORE, I FIRST LEARNED DEFEAT AT THE ACADEMY. BEFORE IRIS, I HAD LIMITLESS POTENTIAL...
...UNTIL IT ALL CAME CRASHING DOWN ON ME.
KLICK
LOOK, A SHOOTING STAR!
NO... IT'S TOO CLOSE, DANDELION. I DON'T THINK THAT'S A--
BUT I GUESS THAT'S THE STORY OF MY LIFE...

THE HARDER I TRY, THE WORSE I FAIL
TO BE CONTINUED...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#2
COVER B

The story so far...

Life after death has proven far tougher than Executive Assistant Lily could ever have imagined. Following a nightclub [illegible] Shinjuku, Lily was fired [illegible] and spiraled into a nightmare [illegible] of eviction and soon, bloodshed. [illegible] is determined and ruthless [illegible] Japanese arms dealer with endless [illegible] and high-tech weaponry, has made it his number one priority to eliminate all [illegible] Assistant threats to his empire, starting with Lily...

EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT: ASSASSINS

[LIFE AFTER DEATH]

PART 2 OF 3

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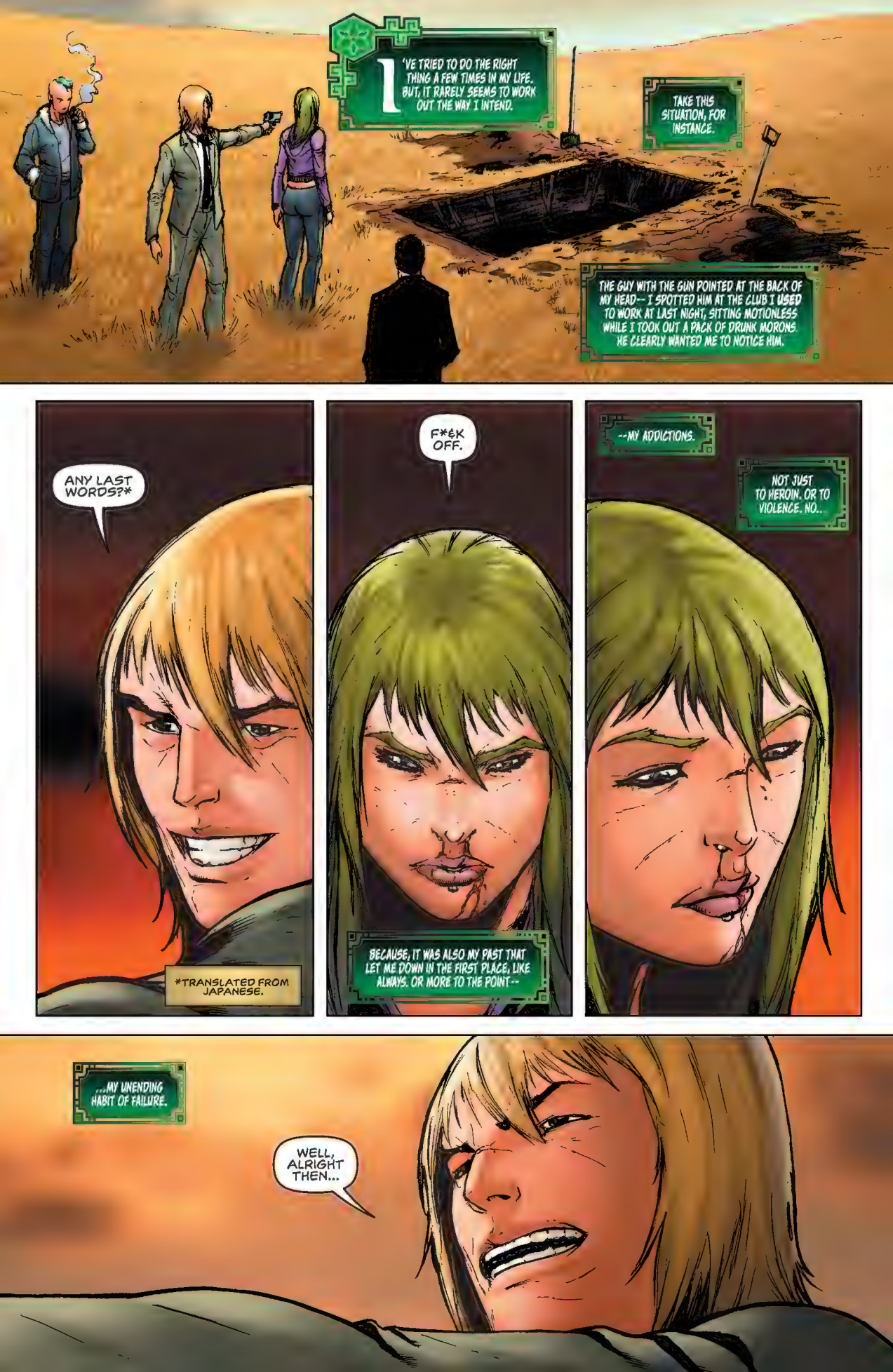
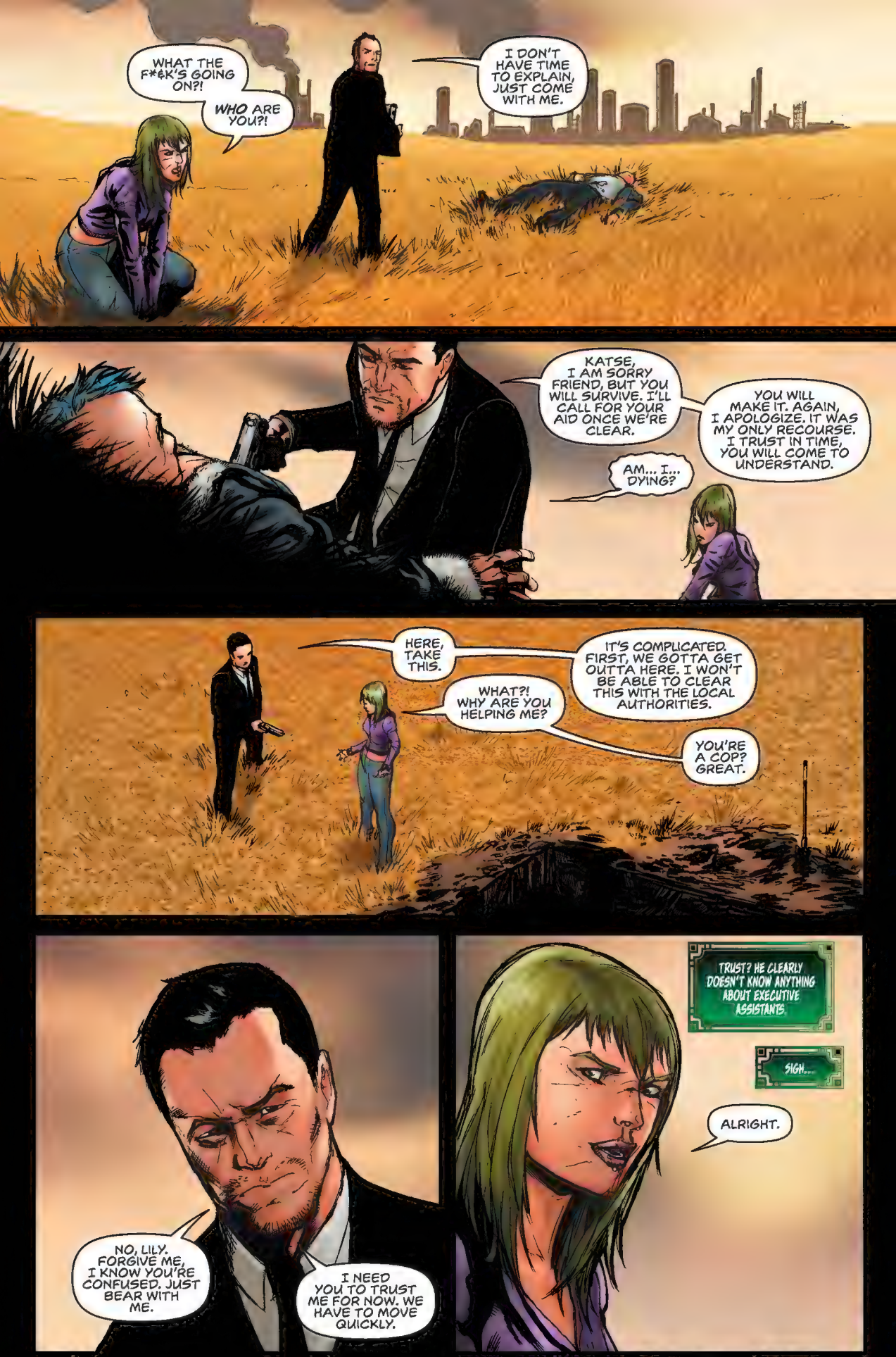

I'VE TRIED TO DO THE RIGHT THING A FEW TIMES IN MY LIFE. BUT, IT RARELY SEEMS TO WORK OUT THE WAY I INTEND.
TAKE THIS SITUATION, FOR INSTANCE.
THE GUY WITH THE GUN POINTED AT THE BACK OF MY HEAD-- I SPOTTED HIM AT THE CLUB I USED TO WORK AT LAST NIGHT, SITTING MOTIONLESS WHILE I TOOK OUT A PACK OF DRUNK MORONS HE CLEARLY WANTED ME TO NOTICE HIM.
ANY LAST WORDS?*
*TRANSLATED FROM JAPANESE.
F*&K OFF.
BECAUSE, IT WAS ALSO MY PAST THAT LET ME DOWN IN THE FIRST PLACE, LIKE ALWAYS. OR MORE TO THE POINT--
--MY ADDICTIONS.
NOT JUST TO HEROIN. OR TO VIOLENCE. NO...
...MY UNENDING HABIT OF FAILURE.
WELL, ALRIGHT THEN...

BANG
...
THUD
HUH--?
DUCK!
WHAT DID YOU DO--
BANG
--AAAGGHHH!


WHAT THE F*&K'S GOING ON?!
WHO ARE YOU?!
I DON'T HAVE TIME TO EXPLAIN, JUST COME WITH ME.
KATSE, I AM SORRY FRIEND, BUT YOU WILL SURVIVE. I'LL CALL FOR YOUR AID ONCE WE'RE CLEAR.
YOU WILL MAKE IT. AGAIN, I APOLOGIZE. IT WAS MY ONLY RECOURSE. I TRUST IN TIME, YOU WILL COME TO UNDERSTAND.
AM... I... DYING?
HERE, TAKE THIS.
WHAT?! WHY ARE YOU HELPING ME?
IT'S COMPLICATED. FIRST, WE GOTTA GET OUTTA HERE. I WON'T BE ABLE TO CLEAR THIS WITH THE LOCAL AUTHORITIES.
YOU'RE A COP? GREAT.
NO, LILY. FORGIVE ME, I KNOW YOU'RE CONFUSED. JUST BEAR WITH ME.
I NEED YOU TO TRUST ME FOR NOW. WE HAVE TO MOVE QUICKLY.
TRUST? HE CLEARLY DOESN'T KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT EXECUTIVE ASSISTANTS.
SIGH...
ALRIGHT.

ASAHI, CHIBA PREFECTURE. JAPAN.
HARU, ARE YOU FLYING?
YES, MOM. I'M THE PILOT. IT'S IMPORTANT I STAY FOCUSED!
WELL, DON'T LET ME KEEP YOU FROM YOUR IMPORTANT DUTY, CAPTAIN, SIR.
UP, UP AND AWAY WE GO!
I DIDN'T EXPECT TO SEE YOU AGAIN BEFORE THE SEASON CHANGED.
I WAS ABLE TO CLEAR SOME TIME IN MY SCHEDULE.
WE ARE HONORED.
YOUR SARCASM IS NOT LOST ON ME.
BUT KNOW THAT YOU ARE ALWAYS MY PRIORITY, SATOMI. BOTH OF YOU.

WHY DO I FIND THIS HARD TO BELIEVE?
YOU SHOULDN'T.
YET, I DO. DESPITE YOUR PRESENCE HERE TODAY, THE DAYS BETWEEN YOUR VISITS GROW LONGER.
YOU KNOW I CANNOT EXPLAIN TO YOU THE REASONS FOR MY ABSENCE, BUT YOU MUST UNDERSTAND IT IS FOR YOUR OWN WELL-BEING. BOTH OF YOU.
LOOK AT ME, TARVER. I AM NOT ANGRY, OR SPITEFUL. WE HAVE BEEN PATIENT TO YOUR NEEDS, AND I *DO* BELIEVE ONE DAY WE WILL ALL BE TOGETHER.
YOU ARE A GOOD WOMAN, AND I *WILL* REPAY THE DEBT OF YOUR TOLERANCE. I AM TAKING STEPS AS WE SPEAK TO ENSURE OUR FUTURE TOGETHER, AWAY FROM MY PAST.
FOR OUR SON'S FUTURE.

WHAT IS THIS PLACE?
IT'S A SAFE HOUSE. SOMEWHERE WE CAN LAY LOW TILL WE FIGURE OUT A PLAN. WE'LL BE--
--SAFE HERE. YEAH, I GET IT.
I SHOULD TELL YOU I'M NOT ALL THAT GOOD AT LAYING LOW. KINDA DOESN'T RUN PARALLEL WITH MY PERSONALITY, IF YOU CATCH MY DRIFT.
I KNOW WHO YOU ARE, LILY.
YOU EXECUTIVE ASSISTANTS ARE SURPRISINGLY NOT VERY STEALTHY FOR BEING TRAINED IN COVERT OPS.
DRINK?
YEAH, WELL... I DIDN'T EXACTLY GRADUATE WITH HONORS. ARE YOU GONNA TELL ME YOUR NAME AT SOME POINT?
IT'S COPE. JUST COPE.
OKAY, JUST COPE. SO FOR REAL... WHO ARE YOU, AND WHY DID YOU SAVE MY LIFE BACK THERE?

YEAH... ABOUT THAT.
I SORTA... WORK FOR THE C.I.A.
AS IN THE CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY? THE C.I.A.-- C.I.A.?!? JEEZ, I AM ONE F*&KING UNLUCKY GIRL, I SWEAR.
JUST LISTEN TO ME FOR A SECOND.
SAVE IT, JUST COPE. I'M NOT GETTING HELPED BY THE UNITED STATES F*&KING GOVERNMENT. I'M THANKFUL FOR WHAT YOU DID, BELIEVE ME, BUT-- I'M NOT STUPID ENOUGH TO PLACE MY TRUST IN YOUR COUNTRY.
WOULD YOU JUST RELAX AND LISTEN TO ME FOR A SECOND?
DON'T TRY TO STOP ME, YOU KNOW WHAT I'M CAPABLE OF.
DON'T YOU AT LEAST WANNA KNOW WHY CERTAIN PEOPLE WANT YOU DEAD?
-:HMPH:-

...
WHAT? WHAT IS IT?
THE WASHROOM!? QUICK.
THERE.
AT THE RISK OF SOUNDING CLICHE-- YOU NEED TO DETOX. GET RIGHT AGAIN.
NOT FOR ME, OR EVEN YOURSELF. YOU NEED TO DO THIS IF YOU PLAN TO STAY ALIVE.
MAYBE COFFEE'S A BETTER CHOICE THAN BEER.
WITHDRAWALS?
UNNH... YEAH, SO?
NOTHING, IT'S JUST...
YOU CALL THIS LIVING?

LATER...
YOU KNOW... I WASN'T ALWAYS LIKE THIS.
A DRUG ADDICT?
NO, YOU BLUNT F*€K. THAT'S NOT WHAT I MEANT.
I WASN'T ALWAYS SO...
...LOST.
LOOK. I'M NO EXPERT IN MATTERS OF FATE, AS YOU CAN SEE.
I'VE SPENT THE PAST DECADE IN SITUATIONS PRETENDING I'M SOMEONE I'M NOT. ALLOWING MY TRUE SELF TO COME TO THE SURFACE IS AN OCCUPATIONAL HAZARD FOR ME. THE PRICE OF A SLIP-UP IS DEATH.
YEAH, ABOUT THAT. WHY DO YOUR PEOPLE WANT ME DEAD?
NOT ME...

"...PEOPLE FAR MORE POWERFUL.
"YOUR FORMER MASTER, TAKEO SUZUKI, KNEW THIS ALL TOO WELL. WHILE HE MUST'VE SEEMED AT THE TIME TO BE THE TOP OF THE FOOD CHAIN TO YOU, HE WAS MERELY A FRONT MAN. ONE OF MANY. ALL OF THEM REPORT TO A MUCH HIGHER POWER.
"MAZUTSU SAI HAS BEEN ON OUR UNOFFICIAL WATCH LIST FOR THE PAST TWO YEARS.
"HE WAS BORN INTO MONEY, BUT THAT DIDN'T STOP HIS WILL TO SUCCEED. HE NEARLY TRIPLED HIS WEALTH BEFORE REACHING THE AGE OF THIRTY. OIL WAS HIS BUSINESS THEN.
"BUT FOR MEN LIKE MAZUTSU, CURRENCY BECOMES A HABIT-- SOMETHING THEY TAKE FOR GRANTED. AND SOON, THEY TURN TO POWER TO SATISFY THEIR DESIRES. GEO-POLITICAL GAME CHANGING BECAME HIS NEW OBSESSION.
"INITIALLY, HE STARTED IN DEFENSE SYSTEMS FOR PEACEFUL, DEMOCRATIC NATIONS. IT WAS HIS FIRST FORAY INTO THE ARMS DEALING INDUSTRY, BUT HE QUICKLY BECAME A FORCE IN THE MARKET.
"IT WASN'T LONG BEFORE HE REALIZED SUCCESS IN THAT INDUSTRY IS NOT FOUND THROUGH PEACE.
"AND HE IS A MAN WHO MUST WIN AT ALL COSTS-- HIS VERY NATURE DEMANDS IT.
"YET, EVEN AT THIS POINT, THE AGENCY DID NOT DEEM HIM A THREAT TO OUR SECURITY. HOWEVER, HIS CURRENT ENTERPRISE IS WHAT CONCERNS US..."

"...POLITICS."
A POLITICIAN? YEAH, FRIGHTENING.
YOU DON'T GET IT.
"THE BEST-- OR WORST KIND OF CRIMINAL IF YOU MAY, DOESN'T HIDE OUT AMONGST OTHER CRIMINALS WHERE HE'S EASY TO SPOT. NO... MAZUTSU IS SMART ENOUGH TO KNOW THE BEST KIND OF CRIMINAL INHABITS THE LANDSCAPE WHERE NO ONE WILL THINK TO LOOK FOR HIM.
"AND WORSE YET, HE USES HIS BLANKET OF POLITICAL DISCOURSE TO HIDE THE TRUE NATURE OF ACTIVITIES...
"...BLOOD.
PLEASE--- NO!
"MEN LIKE THIS, THEY MUST ALWAYS FALL BACK ON THEIR TRUE NATURE, WHAT CALLS TO THEM. AND THE PEOPLE HE'S BEGUN KILLING ARE VALUED ASSETS TO US."

I'M SURE YOU KNOW BETTER THAN MOST ABOUT FALLING BACK ON OLD HABITS.
YEAH, WELL... HOW DOES THIS RELATE TO MAZUTSU WANTING ME DEAD? JUST BECAUSE MY EMPLOYER WORKED FOR HIM DOESN'T MEAN I KNOW ANYTHING-- IF THAT'S WHAT HE THINKS.
IT'S MORE COMPLICATED THAN THAT...
"...AND YOU'RE NOT THE ONLY EA HE WANTS DEAD.
"OUR INTELLIGENCE TELLS US HIS INVOLVEMENTS IN THE SCHOOLS HAS OCCURRED AS EARLY AS A DECADE AGO. AND ONE THING WE KNOW FOR CERTAIN...
"...AT ONE TIME HE HAD AN EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT OF HIS OWN.
"BUT ALL THAT'S SINCE CHANGED. WE DON'T KNOW WHY-- BUT HE WANTS ALL OF YOUR KIND... ELIMINATED."
BUT IT GETS WORSE.
HE DOESN'T JUST WANT YOU DEAD BECAUSE OF THAT. YOUR FORMER EMPLOYER, TAKEO, WELL...
...HE ALSO WORKED FOR US.

LATER THAT NIGHT...
HEY... YOU OK?
THAT'S A SILLY QUESTION.
YEAH, I GUESS SO.
YOU GUESS SO? I JUST FOUND OUT THE GUY I DEDICATED MOST OF MY ADULT LIFE TO WAS WORKING FOR THE F*&KING C.I.A., WHICH MEANS BY ALL ACCOUNTS-- I WAS WORKING FOR YOU IDIOTS ALSO.
WE'RE NOT ALL IDIOTS, LILY. AND HEY, AT LEAST SOME OF THAT MURDER AND ESPIONAGE YOU PERFORMED WHILE UNDER HIS SERVICE HAD SOME JUSTICE TO IT.
YOU AGENTS ARE NO LESS SINISTER THAN ANY CRIMINAL I'VE ENCOUNTERED, YOU JUST HAVE THE LAW OF THE LAND TO PROTECT YOURSELVES.
LOOK, I'M NOT GONNA GET INTO A DEBATE OVER--
--CAN IT. YOU RESCUED ME BACK THERE. YOU DIDN'T HAVE TO BUT YOU DID. YOU OBVIOUSLY NEED MY HELP IN SOME WAY OR I WOULDN'T BE HERE, SO IN RETURN I WANT SOMETHING FROM YOU.
I WANT YOU TO SAVE ME... AGAIN.

TOKYO.
YOU'RE LATE.
APOLOGIES, SIR. MY FLIGHT WAS DELAYED.
OFF SCOUTING FOR MORE EXECUTIVE ASSISTANTS, I TRUST?
SOMETHING LIKE THAT.
I DON'T PAY YOU TO BE VAGUE, I PAY YOU FOR SPECIFICS.
KAITO IS DEAD.
WHAT?!
YOU HEARD ME. SHE TOOK KATSE DOWN AS WELL.
AND COPE?
NOWHERE TO BE FOUND.
OH.
EXACTLY. NO DOUBT THE C.I.A. OR MOSSAD IS INVOLVED.
I'M SORRY, MAZUTSU. HE WAS A GOOD MAN.
NO, HE WASN'T. THAT IS WHY I HIRED HIM. YET, NOW AN EVEN GREATER PROBLEM PRESENTS ITSELF.
WE MUST CLEANSE OUR PEOPLE BEFORE I CAN BE CERTAIN OF WHO TO TRUST AGAIN.

I HAVEN'T FELT A WARM SHOWER IN DAYS. COPE SEEMS ON THE LEVEL, AT LEAST, PROVIDING A PLACE FOR ME TO LAY LOW. BUT, I'M NOT STAYING BECAUSE THEY NEED MY HELP.
I'M STAYING BECAUSE I HAVE NOWHERE ELSE TO GO. IT'S SUCH A HELPLESS FEELING, I'LL ADMIT.
I'M SO WEAK.
I CAN KILL A MAN IN LESS THAN FIVE SECONDS WITH ONE ARM TIED BEHIND MY BACK.
SO WHY AM I DYING SUCH A SLOW DEATH NOW?
F*&K IT. I CAN DO THIS.

HEY... WHAT ARE YOU WATCHING?
AS THE DAYS PASS BY, I FEEL MORE AND MORE TRAPPED. IF THIS IS WHAT REHAB IS SUPPOSED TO BE LIKE, IT'S FAR WORSE THAN I EVER IMAGINED. THIS NORMAL LIFE STUFF... YOU NEVER GET USED TO IT.
I'M POSITIVE I DRIVE HIM NUTS. AS SOON AS THE WITHDRAWALS KICKED IN, I LET OUT ALL MY FRUSTRATIONS ON THE NEAREST BREATHING PERSON.
OR ON THE TOILET.
YEAH... I PRETTY MUCH HATE EVERYTHING RIGHT ABOUT NOW.
BUT, TO COPE'S CREDIT, HE WON'T QUIT ON ME. MIGHT BE THE FIRST TIME... EVER... THAT SOMEBODY HAS NOT QUIT ON ME.

MAZUTSU-SAN, PLEASE!
IT'S NOT YOUR FAULT, HIDEKI.
UPON JOINING OUR ORGANIZATION, YOU WERE REQUIRED TO FIERCELY DEVOTE ALL OF YOUR LOYALTY TO ME.
ALL OF YOU.
HOWEVER, AFTER RECENT EVENTS, IT'S CLEAR THE DEVOTION OF OUR PEOPLE MUST BE PUT TO THE TEST. YOU MEN HAVE BEEN SELECTED NOT BECAUSE OF YOUR ABILITIES, OR YOUR PERSONALITIES, OR BECAUSE OF ANY INDISCRETIONS-- NO...
...YOU WERE CHOSEN BECAUSE I DO NOT COMPLETELY TRUST YOU.
YOU ARE NEW, OR INEXPERIENCED, OR SIMPLY SUSPICIOUS, AND THUS... AN EXAMPLE MUST BE MADE TO MY VETERANS.
PLEASE!
MR. TARVER, IF YOU MAY?

THE FREE ELECTRON LASER CANNON IS PART OF OUR NEW LINE OF NEXT-GEN HARDWARE, AS I'M SURE MOST OF YOU ARE AWARE.
NO, STOP!
PLEASE, SIR!
NOOOOO!
FLIIK
WE'VE TESTED IT IN THE FIELD NUMEROUS TIMES BUT NEVER IN ACTUAL COMBAT. WELL...
...THIS WILL HAVE TO BE CLOSE ENOUGH.
PLEASE!!!
MR. TARVER, I THINK YOU SHOULD HAVE THE HONOR.
AS YOU... WISH.
LET THIS SERVE AS A LESSON TO ALL OF US. THIS ORGANIZATION IS BUILT ON TRUST. WE LOST ONE OF OUR BEST SOLDIERS TO AN EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT AND A TRAITOR BECAUSE THERE WAS A FRACTURE IN OUR BOND OF LOYALTY.
WE MUST BE SURE OF EVERY MEMBER'S DEDICATION. IF WE CANNOT BE CERTAIN...
CLICK

...THEN WE MUST *ELIMINATE* ALL DOUBT.

NOW, FIND ME *LILY.*

TO BE CONTINUED...

Executive Assistant: Assassins

Vince HERNANDEZ
Jordan GUNDERSON
Charlie MOK
Teodoro GONZALEZ
Josh REED

ASPEN

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BLOCKADE ENTERTAINMENT

#3

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#3
COVER B

The story so far...

The withdrawals from her past life, as well as the demons within have made Lily's present as tumultuous as ever. Yet, a CIA [illegible] the codename Cope has [illegible] once deadly Executive Ass[illegible] again part of her edge as the [illegible] life continues to grow. Mazuste, the executive assistant murdering oil tycoon has seen fit to issue Lily's permanent [illegible] on a threat not to be taken lightly by a man known for always getting his [illegible]

[illegible] = ASSASSINS

LIFE AFTER DEATH

PART 3 OF 3

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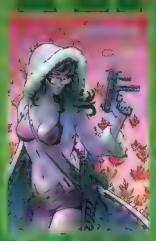

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EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT: ASSASSINS™ Vol. 1 Issue 3

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THE SAFE HOUSE.
SO, YOU'VE KICKED ONE ADDICTION, MAYBE IT'S TIME YOU START IN ON THAT ONE.
SHUT IT, COPE.
COULDN'T RESIST, SORRY. SHUTTING IT NOW.
HEY...
...I APPRECIATE YOU HELPING ME GET CLEAN.
THE LEAST I COULD DO.
YOU DIDN'T HAVE TO DO ANYTHING.
SO WHY DID YOU... REALLY?
THE TRUTH? AT FIRST, I SAVED YOUR LIFE BECAUSE NO MATTER WHAT YOU THINK, I'M STILL AN AGENT OF JUSTICE. I'D WITNESSED TOO MANY CRIMES DONE BY KAITO. I COULDN'T BEAR ONE MORE, ESPECIALLY YOUR DEATH.
AND THEN... I DON'T KNOW... YOU KINDA GREW ON ME.
HEY, DON'T GO FALLING IN LOVE WITH ME OR ANYTHING. I'M NOT THAT KINDA GIRL.
HA, SHUT IT.
NO, REALLY, YOU'RE NOT SO BAD AFTER YOU GET PAST THE TOUGH OUTER SHELL.
I THINK YOU CAN BECOME SOMETHING GOOD FOR A CHANGE, AND SO DOES THE AGENCY. THAT WAS THEM ON THE PHONE.
WHAT?
SO, THAT'S WHAT ALL OF THIS IS ABOUT? YOU'RE TRYING TO CLEAN ME UP SO I CAN BE THE AGENCY'S KILLING MACHINE. TAKE OUT MAZUTSU FOR YOU. IS THAT IT?!?
LILY, NO THAT'S NOT HOW--
--F*&KING SAVE IT. I KNEW IT. HAD TO BE SOMETHING. I'M NOBODY'S BITCH ANYMORE. AND I DON'T WANT TO BE PART OF YOUR TEAM, JUST FORGET ABOUT THAT EVER HAPPENING, OK?

ASAHI, CHIBA PREFECTURE. JAPAN.
ARE YOU SERIOUS, BUT WHY?
I CANNOT EXPLAIN, IT IS TOO DANGEROUS YOU KNOWING.
HARU AND YOU MUST BE PREPARED TO LEAVE IN THE MORNING. I HAVE SEEN TO THE ARRANGEMENTS FOR YOUR DEPARTURE... AND WHEN THE TIME IS RIGHT-- I WILL REJOIN YOU BOTH.
COME WITH US NOW. IF YOU ARE IN DANGER, WHO WILL PROTECT YOU? IF SOMETHING WERE TO HAPPEN TO YOU--
--NOTHING WILL HAPPEN TO ME, I PROMISE--
--YOU...
...ARE CORRECT. NOTHING WILL HAPPEN TO YOU, MR. TARVER.
WHAT DO YOU WA--
--LOOK AT MY FACE...
...AND YOU WILL KNOW WHY I AM HERE.
LILAC?!?
SATOMI-- TAKE HARU AND GO!
BUT, WHO--
--NOW!

YOU COME TO MY HOME, THREATEN MY FAMILY?! YOU SHOULD BE DEAD!
I HAD MY ORDERS.
DO NOT PREACH TO ME! THE BURNED SOULS OF AN ENTIRE ACADEMY WOULD DISAGREE WITH YOUR HIGH MORAL GROUND-- OR HAVE YOU FORGOTTEN ALL THE INNOCENT CHILDREN YOU MURDERED?
AS DO I!
UNNGH!
YOU'VE ALREADY TRIED BEFORE! IT DIDN'T END WELL FOR YOU.
YOU DON'T... UNNGH... KNOW...
...ME!
AGGGGGH!
I'LL... UNNGH... KILL YOU...

AHHH!
CRASH
STAY AWAY FROM HIM!
FATHER!
SATOMI! WHAT ARE YOU DOING?! STAY BEHIND ME! I WILL PROTECT YOU!
DO YOU THINK THIS IS A GAME?
YOU RISK THE CHERISHED POSSESSIONS OF YOUR LIFE AS IF THEY WERE PIECES ON A CHESSBOARD.
YOU KNOW NOTHING OF AN EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT...
...WE DO NOT HESITATE.
NO!
BANG
BANG

SATOMI! HARU!
WHAT HAVE YOU DONE?!
IT IS NOT WHAT I HAVE DONE, IT WAS THE FATE *YOU* CHOSE THROUGH YOUR MISDEEDS.
YOU CANNOT HIDE FROM THE SINS OF YOUR PAST.
THEY WERE MY WORLD. WITHOUT THEM... YOU MAY AS WELL KILL ME.
I WILL NOT.
I WILL ALLOW YOU TO LIVE WITH A WOUND THAT WILL NEVER HEAL.
PERHAPS IT WILL SWAY YOUR FUTURE CHOICES... AND YOUR *LOYALTIES*, FROM THIS POINT FORWARD.

HEY.
LISTEN...
DON'T WORRY, I'M GATHERING MY THINGS AND WE CAN GO OUR SEPARATE WAYS.
...I KNOW YOU MEANT WELL EARLIER, I SHOULDN'T HAVE JUMPED ON YOUR CASE LIKE I DID.
I'M JUST TIRED OF BEING PULLED EVERY WHICH WAY, NEVER ONCE MAKING THE CHOICE ON MY OWN. MY FUTURE'S ALWAYS BEEN DECIDED FOR ME.
I WASN'T TRYING TO DECIDE YOUR FUTURE, LILY. I JUST WANTED YOU TO KNOW THERE ARE OTHER OPTIONS BESIDES GOING BACK TO THE LIFE YOU KNEW BEFORE.
I... KNOW.
YOU'VE SAVED ME IN A LOT OF WAYS COPE.
IT HASN'T GONE UNNOTICED.
IT'S JUST... I HAVE TRUST ISSUES. AND I KNOW THAT'S CLICHÉ, BUT IN MY PREVIOUS LINE OF WORK I THINK YOU CAN UNDERSTAND WHERE IT'S COMING FROM.
I UNDERSTAND. BUT DO YOU *REALLY* THINK YOU'RE SAFER NOW ON YOUR OWN?
WELL...
...I'M NOT REALLY *ON* MY OWN, AM I?

I CAN ONLY HELP YOU IF YOU LET ME, LILY. THAT MEANS TRUSTING THE AGENCY AS WELL.
NO, IT MEANS TRUSTING YOU-- AND *YOU ALONE.*
-SIGH-
I CAN'T ABANDON MY LIFE TO SAVE YOURS. I'VE GIVEN MY LIFE TO THE AGENCY, AND ALMOST LOST IT A FEW TIMES IN THE PROCESS. I CAN'T JUST GIVE ALL THAT UP.
HEY, I'M NOT ASKING YOU TO HELP ME.
BUT, THAT DOESN'T MEAN YOU CAN'T FORGET ABOUT ME. ALLOW ME TO START OVER.
YOUR APOLOGY SOUNDS MORE LIKE A DEMAND.
IT'S A REQUEST.
I APPRECIATE THAT BUT I CAN'T GUARANTEE ANYTHING. AS TERRIBLE AS IT SOUNDS, THE AGENCY VIEWS YOU AS AN ASSET, ONE THEY BELIEVE I'VE BEEN CULTIVATING. IF YOU JUST UP AND VANISHED, I'D BE THE ONE WHO TAKES THE FALL.
...
F*€K IT.
I'LL DO IT-- BUT ONLY IF YOU PROMISE ME YOU WON'T END UP BACK ON THE STREETS.
DEAL.

LATER...
WE HAVE HER LOCATION. MY SOURCES IN THE AGENCY CONFIRM IT. YOU ARE TO SEE TO IT-- PREFERABLY BETTER THAN KAITO. YOU ARE TO TAKE THE PROTOTYPE WEAPON. IT IS READY. UNDERSTOOD?
UNDERSTOOD.
DO YOU? BECAUSE YOU DO NOT SEEM YOURSELF, TARVER.
PERHAPS YOU ARE STILL IN MOURNING?
YOU... KNOW?!?
OF COURSE.
DID YOU REALLY EXPECT ME NOT TO FIND OUT? I MAKE IT A HABIT TO KNOW EVERYTHING ABOUT THOSE I SURROUND MYSELF WITH.
AND YOU ARE MY MOST TRUSTED ADVISOR.
APOLOGIES MAZUTSU. I SHOULD HAVE THOUGHT BETTER OF IT--
--ALL OF IT.
YOU FAULT YOURSELF AS YOU SHOULD, FOR IN OUR LINE OF WORK THERE IS NO ROOM FOR EMOTIONAL ATTACHMENT. YET, I FIND MYSELF ALLOWING FORGIVENESS FOR YOUR LIES. YOUR PAST DEVOTION HAS AFFORDED YOU THAT IN THE LEAST. HOWEVER...
...KEEP SECRETS FROM ME AGAIN AND MY MERCY WILL NOT BE AVAILABLE TO YOU, DO YOU UNDERSTAND?
I DO, MAZUTSU. I THANK YOU FOR YOUR KINDNESS.
DO NOT THINK OF IT. YOU WILL REMAIN AT MY SIDE-- AND *YOU ALONE* WILL DELIVER LILY TO ME, DEAD OR ALIVE, AND REGAIN MY TRUST. ARE WE IN AGREEMENT?
ALWAYS... MAZUTSU.

Y'KNOW, I'M GONNA MISS THIS P.O.S.
I'M NOT. I'D RATHER BE IN THE GAME AGAIN.
GOING ROGUE. HELPING AN "ASSET" ESCAPE. I'D SAY THE GAME IS ABOUT TO GET MUCH MORE DIFFICULT FOR YOU GOING FORWARD.
I'LL GET BY. IT'S WHAT I DO.
JUST DON'T MAKE ME REGRET IT. I'M PUTTING MY ASS OUT THERE TO GIVE YOU A CHANCE AT A NEW BEGINNING.
SEE THAT YOU FOLLOW THROUGH ON YOUR END OF THE BARGAIN.
YOU HAVE NOTHING TO WOR--
KRRSHHH
COPE!
NNNGH!
THUD
COPE, YOU TRAITOR. ONE DOWN.

COPE...
...NOT AGAIN.
ALWAYS THE SAME...
...RESULT...
...ALWAYS...
...DEATH.

I'M SORRY I BROUGHT THIS ON YOU, JUST COPE.
AND I HOPE YOU UNDERSTAND--
--THIS IS MY ONLY PLAY--
UNNNGH!
CHOOOM
THEY WANT ME DEAD, WELL, THE JOKE'S ON THEM--

--BECAUSE I DIED A LONG TIME AGO.

THE SHOOTER'S ON THE ROOFTOP. I NEED TO GET UP THERE-- AND QUICK.
CHOOM
BUT, FIRST, I NEED TO SURVIVE DOWN HERE. LUCKILY, I'VE NEVER FELT BETTER THANKS TO THE DETOX... THANKS TO COPE.
KRAAAAASH

HE'LL BE EXPECTING ME TO TAKE THE STAIRS.
FIRE ON ME WHEN I BURST THROUGH THE DOOR.
BUT I HAVE OTHER ALTERNATIVES AVAILABLE TO ME.
OF COURSE. NO FIRE ESCAPE.
LOOKS LIKE THE HARD WAY IT IS.

C'MON...
CRAAAAK
NNNGH...
GET UP. I WANT TO SEE YOUR FACE. YOU WANTED ME, HERE I AM.
YOU HAVE NO IDEA WHAT YOU'RE UP AGAINST, LILY.
THAT'S WHERE YOU'RE WRONG. I KNOW EXACTLY WHAT YOU PEOPLE ARE CAPABLE OF.
COPE'S BODY CAN ATTEST TO THAT. YOUR BOSS MAZUTSU IS NOT GONNA SEE ME COMING, TRUST ME.
IT'S YOU WHO IS WRONG--
--HE SENT ME TO TAKE YOU OUT-- ALONG WITH THE PROTOTYPE WEAPON YOU STAND ABOVE-- ONE WE HAVE... NNGH... ENSURED WILL NOT BE RETURNING FROM THIS TEST.
CLICK
BEEEEEEEEEP

AHHHHH!
KABOOOM
UNNGH!
NO YOU DON'T!
THUD
-:COUGH, COUGH!:-
AGHH!
CRAKK
FWAP
THUMP

-PTUU!-
YOU THINK... NGGH... THIS IS GONNA STOP HIM? HE WILL NEVER STOP. YOU KNOW TOO MUCH. HE WILL NEVER CEASE.
YOU KNOW, I DIDN'T EVEN KNOW TAKEO WORKED FOR THE C.I.A. BEFORE COPE TOLD ME, YOU IDIOTS.
DOESN'T... MATTER NOW. HE WILL NEVER STOP UNTIL EVERY TRACE OF TAKEO IS RIDDEN.
YOU CAN DEFEAT ME. KILL ME EVEN. I HAVE NOTHING TO LIVE FOR ANYMORE, REGARDLESS.
BUT, MAZUTSU...
...HE WILL BE YOUR END, ASSASSIN.
LET US FINISH THIS.
I WILL SEE YOU SOON, HITOMI.
THUNK

MORE BLOOD. I GUESS I JUST CAN'T ESCAPE IT. NO MATTER HOW HARD I TRY TO REFORM, TO BE A BETTER PERSON, DEATH IS ALWAYS RIGHT AROUND THE CORNER.
IT'S AN INEVITABILITY.
IT'S WHAT DRIVES ME. A DESTINY I CAN'T ESCAPE...
AND SOON... VERY SOON...
...MAZUISU WILL SHARE THE SAME FATE.

TOKYO.
TARVER'S REMAINS HAVE BEEN TAKEN TO THE CITY MORGUE, SIR.
THANK YOU, YOU MAY SEE YOURSELF OUT.
SIR.
AN UNFORTUNATE TURN OF EVENTS.
IS IT NOT AS YOU PLANNED?
INDEED IT IS. IF TARVER SUCCEEDED, HE'D HAVE RID ME OF AN INCESSANT NUISANCE, YET I KNEW HE WOULD BE UNABLE TO DO SO. LILY HAS PROVEN TOO HARD A TARGET.
YET, THE TRAGEDY OF THE CIRCUMSTANCES REMAINS A FACT. TARVER WAS ONE OF MY BEST MEN. HIS LOSS WILL SURELY BE FELT.
IT WAS A NECESSITY. HIS LOYALTY WAS IN DOUBT.
IT WAS NOT IN DOUBT. IT WAS *CERTAIN.* HIS PRIVATE LIFE, HIS FAMILY-- HIS SECRETS-- MADE IT IMPOSSIBLE TO DEVOTE TRUST IN HIM.
I THOUGHT HIS INVOLVEMENT IN THE DESTRUCTION OF THE EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT ACADEMY WOULD STEEL HIS NERVES, BUT I ADMIT TO MY MISCALCULATION OF HIS LOYALTY.
YOUR MISSION WAS UNAVOIDABLE. THEY HAD TO BE ELIMINATED AND SO DID HE. YOU ACCOMPLISHED THE TASK WELL...

...LILAC.
WITH PLEASURE, MASTER.
YOUR NEXT MISSION IS CLEAR?
OF COURSE.
LILY WILL SOON FOLLOW HIM TO THE AFTERLIFE.
TO BE CONTINUED IN EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT ASSASSINS #6: "EXECUTIVE EXTINCTION" PART 1.

Executive Assistant: Assassins

Vince HERNANDEZ
Jordan GUNDERSON
Jonathan BOLERJACK
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#4

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Sophora

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COVER B

The story so far

They are raised from their youth with strict obedience and brutally trained to protect and serve their respective masters with [illegible] loyalty and often times [illegible] necessary. They are the Executive Assistants.

LOST AT SEA

PART 1 OF 2

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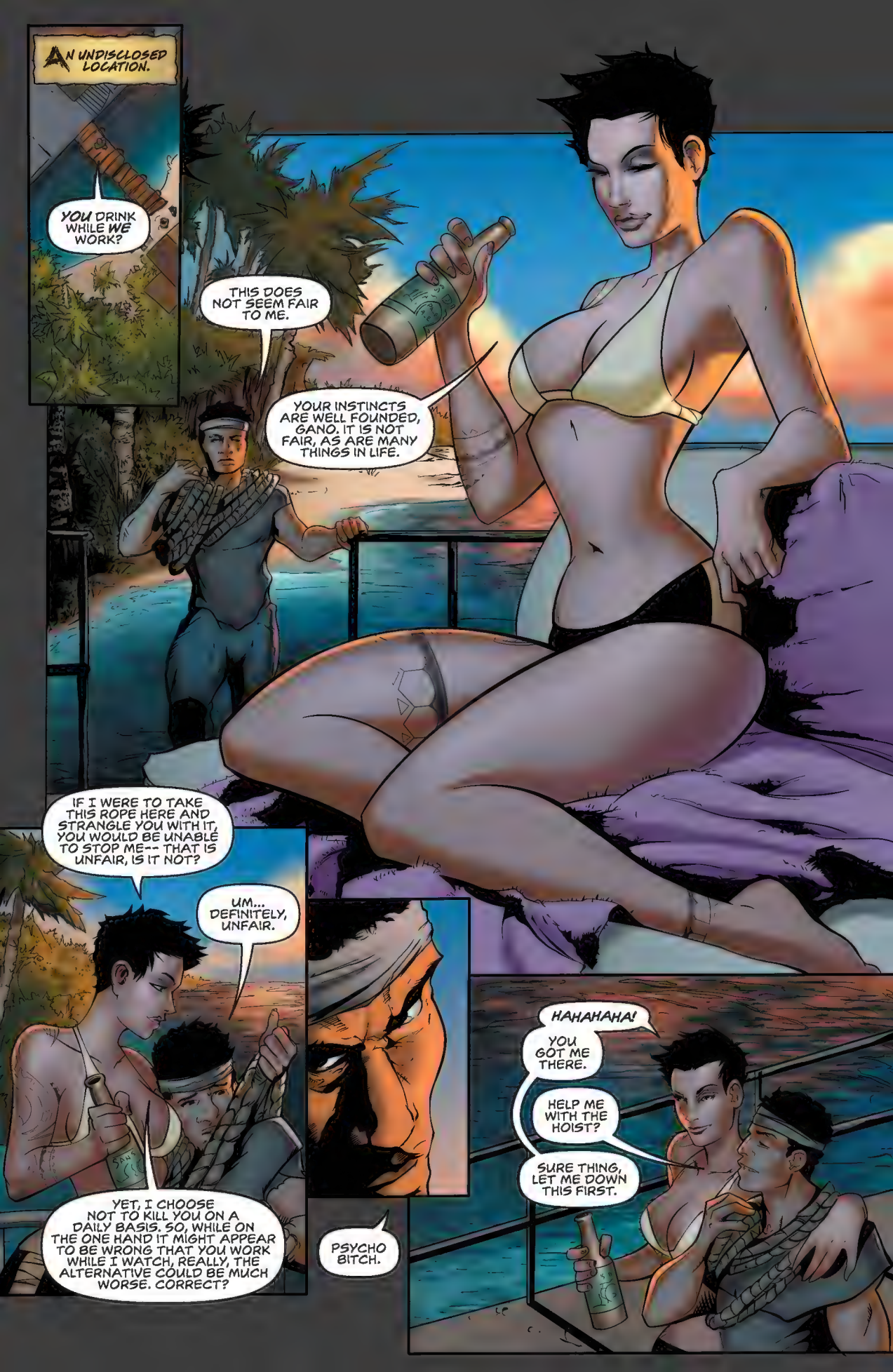
THE SEAS NEAR TONGATAPU ISLAND.
THE OCEAN WINDS ABIDE OUR MEETING. NORMALLY, THIS TIME OF THE SEASON, THE TIDES HAVE A MIND OF THEIR OWN.
HOWEVER, TODAY, NOTHING BUT CALM SEAS FOR ENDLESS KNOTS. I'D SAY...

IT'S A PERFECT DAY TO PERISH.
PLEASE! LET ME GO!
I WOULD DO SO WILLINGLY AND WITH MUCH PLEASURE, IF YOU WOULD JUST DIVULGE THE INFORMATION I SEEK.
HRRGGH! WHO ARE YOU?! WHY HAVE YOU TAKEN ME HOSTAGE?!
WHO AM I?
I AM AN EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT. DO YOU KNOW WHAT THAT IS?
IT MEANS I AM THE MASTER OF YOUR FATE.
PLEASE-- I'M JUST A VESSEL MERCHANT. I HAVE NOT CROSSED YOU IN ANY WAY.
YOU SPEAK THE TRUTH. HOWEVER...
...YOUR MOTIVE I COULD CARE LESS ABOUT. IT IS THE INFORMATION YOU POSSESS I COVET.
WHICH OF YOUR SHIPS ON AIS* IS CARRYING THE CAPTIVE MEN TAKEN BY THE TONGAN GOVERNMENT? GIVE ME A NAME.
I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT!
* AUTOMATIC IDENTIFICATION SYSTEM.

NO--WAIT!
REALLY, YOU CAN MAKE THIS EASY ON YOURSELF.
DO YOU KNOW HOW FAR OUT WE ARE?
HOW MANY DIFFERENT BREEDS OF SHARK INFEST THESE WATERS?
YOU WILL NEVER SURVIVE OUT HERE, AND FOR WHAT? ALL I ASK IS A NAME AND YOU WILL BE SET FREE.
ALRIGHT! JUST PLEASE, GET ME UP!
NOT BEFORE--
--THE SEA VOYAGER!
THAT IS THE NAME OF THE VESSEL, NOW PLEASE!!!
SHE IS CAPABLE.
I WARNED YOU NEVER TO DOUBT SOPHORA.
POINT TAKEN.
DO IT.
WAIT! I TOLD YOU WHAT YOU WANTED!
DO NOT FRET. I ALWAYS KEEP MY WORD--
RIIIP
--YOU ARE FREE.
NOOOOO!
SPLASH

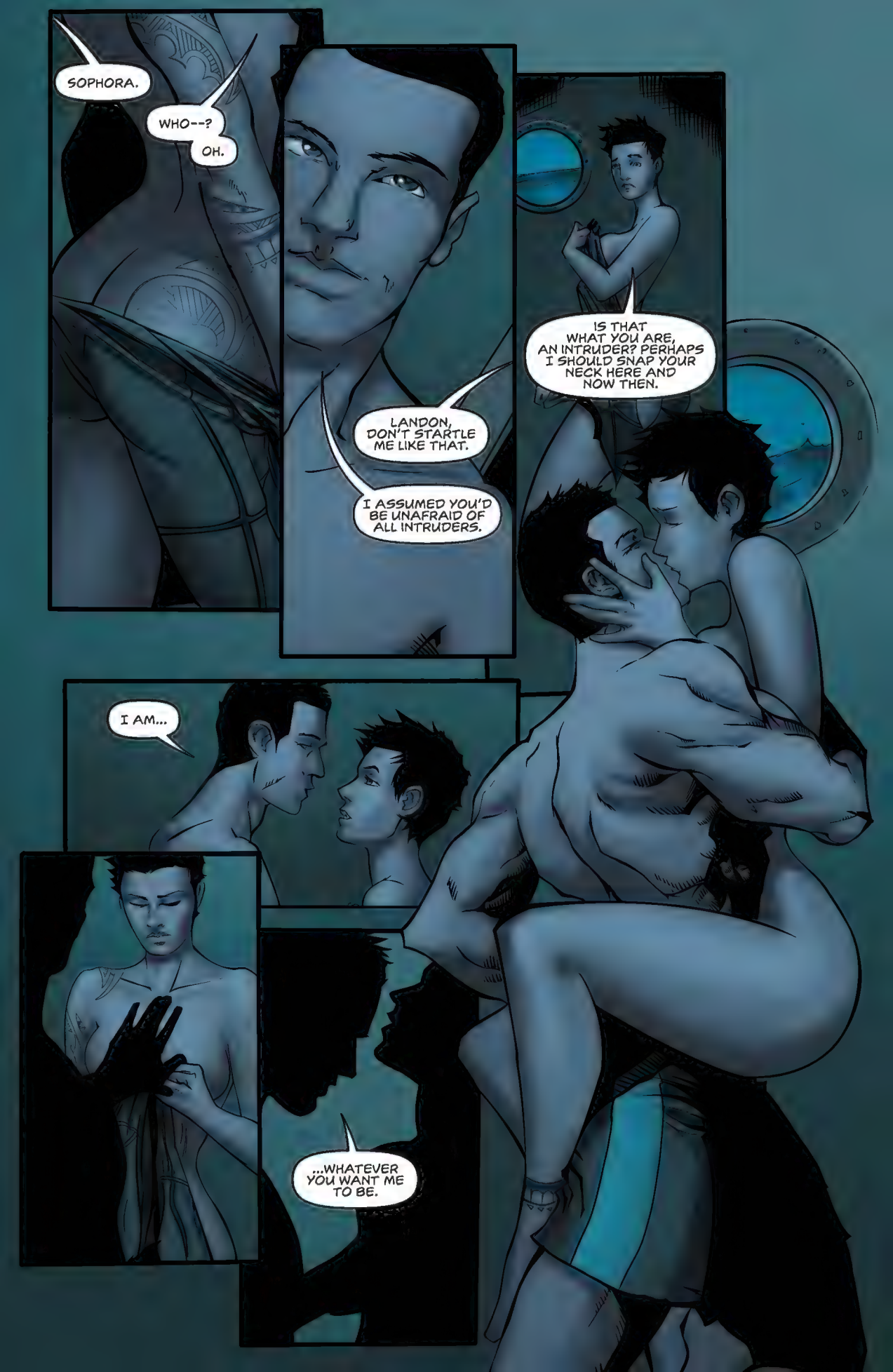

AN UNDISCLOSED LOCATION.
YOU DRINK WHILE WE WORK?
THIS DOES NOT SEEM FAIR TO ME.
YOUR INSTINCTS ARE WELL FOUNDED, GANO. IT IS NOT FAIR, AS ARE MANY THINGS IN LIFE.
IF I WERE TO TAKE THIS ROPE HERE AND STRANGLE YOU WITH IT, YOU WOULD BE UNABLE TO STOP ME-- THAT IS UNFAIR, IS IT NOT?
UM... DEFINITELY, UNFAIR.
YET, I CHOOSE NOT TO KILL YOU ON A DAILY BASIS. SO, WHILE ON THE ONE HAND IT MIGHT APPEAR TO BE WRONG THAT YOU WORK WHILE I WATCH, REALLY, THE ALTERNATIVE COULD BE MUCH WORSE. CORRECT?
PSYCHO BITCH.
HAHAHAHA!
YOU GOT ME THERE.
HELP ME WITH THE HOIST?
SURE THING, LET ME DOWN THIS FIRST.

Ollie Belle
WHAT DO YOU THINK SHE FINDS SO FUNNY?
WHO GIVES A F*#K?
THE WOMAN DOESN'T DO ANYTHING WE CANNOT, YET SHE IS TREATED AS LA NOCHE TRISTE, OR SOME OTHER LOST TREASURE.
YOU WOULD BE WISE NOT TO LET BOSS HEAR SUCH WORDS, MARKEL.
TIKOTÉ KNOWS MY LOYALTY LIES UNDER HIS FLAG-- ALWAYS. BUT IT ENDS WITH *HIS* HAND. I DON'T TAKE ORDERS FROM HER, OR *YOU*, LANDON.
EASE YOURSELF, I DID NOT INTEND TO RILE YOU, ALTHOUGH THE TASK IS NOT TOO DIFFICULT.
DO NOT CONCERN YOURSELF WITH MY FEELINGS. I KNOW MY PLACE, AND THOSE WHO DO NOT WILL SOON DISCOVER THEIRS.
TOUGH WORDS, MARKEL.
ONES I ANTICIPATE YOU WILL ENFORCE ON YOUR NEXT MISSON?
OF COURSE, TIKOTÉ, I REMAIN READY FOR THE TASK-- ALWAYS.
AND WHAT OF YOU, LANDON?
YOU CAN COUNT ON ME, BOSS.
WE SHALL SEE ABOUT THAT.

LATER...
CHING
WHEN I WAS A YOUNG GIRL AT THE ACADEMY, MY TEACHER WAS RUTHLESS.
SHE BEAT THE $HIT OUT OF ME DAILY. I CRIED MYSELF TO SLEEP FOR AS LONG AS I CAN REMEMBER.
CRACK
YOU FORCE THE ATTACK TOO SUDDEN.
IT LEAVES YOU EXPOSED.
HRAAA!
YOU ARE ALSO STUBBORN.
AND ONE DAY--

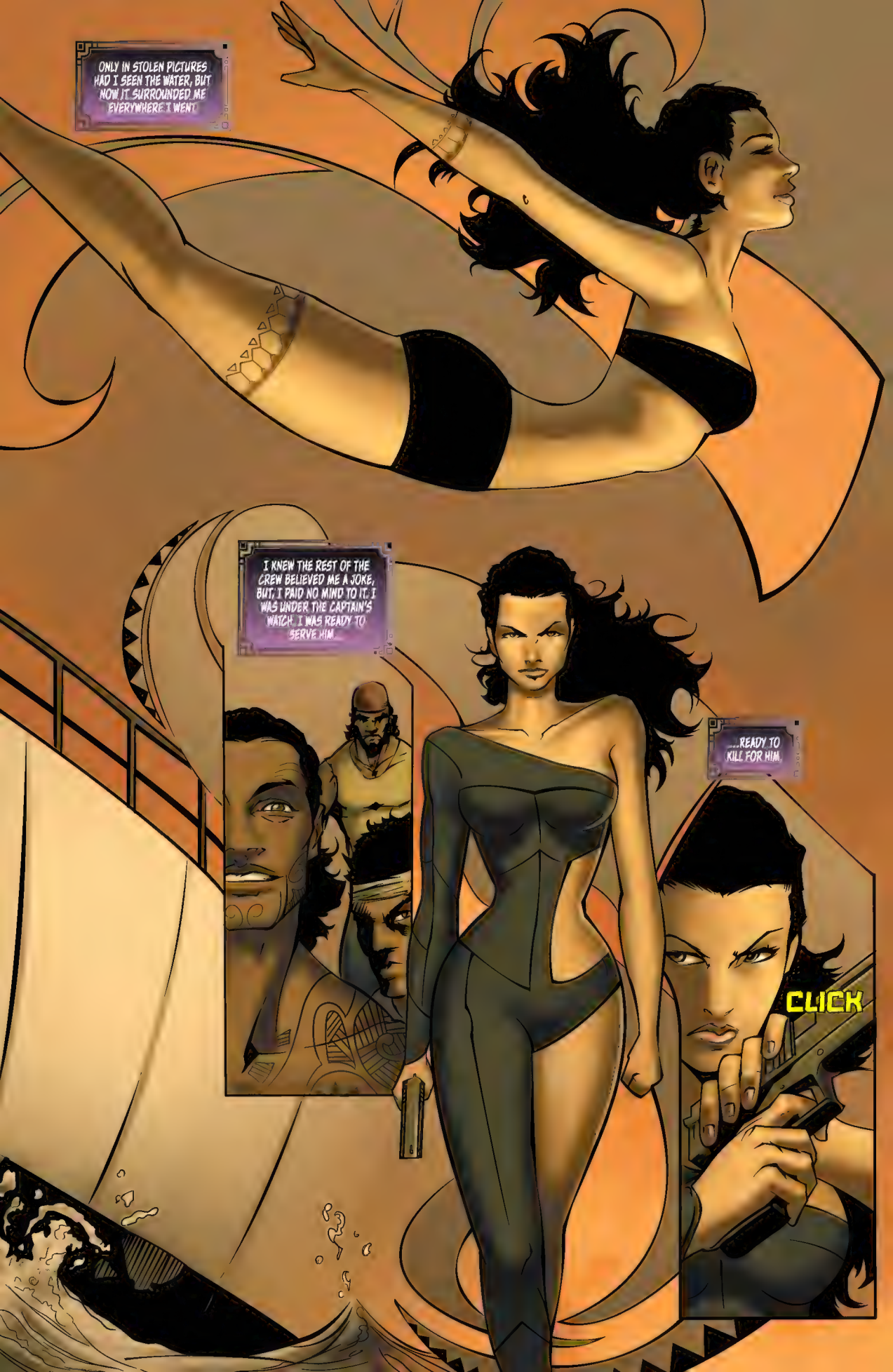
--IT WILL BE YOUR DOWNFALL.
SMASH
HAD ENOUGH?
PERHAPS.
BUT, I ALMOST HAD YOU.
WE'LL HAVE TO WORK ON YOUR DEFINITION OF THE WORD "ALMOST."
I DON'T CRY MYSELF TO SLEEP THESE DAYS, BUT, I WILL NEVER ALLOW MYSELF TO BE AT EASE KNOWING THE NEXT PAINFUL LESSON MAY BE JUST AROUND THE CORNER.
...AND I NEVER FORGET THIS.

NIGHTFALL...
WHERE IS YOUR HONOR, ALLOWING HER TO BEAT YOU IN EXHIBITION AS SO?
WE ARE PIRATES, MARKEL, AND YOU SPEAK TO ME OF HONOR?
THAT IS BESIDE THE POINT. WE DO WHAT WE MUST FOR SURVIVAL, FOR EACH OTHER. BUT, TO LET A WOMEN LIKE HER KICK YOUR ASS IN FRONT OF THE CREW, WHAT DO YOU THINK THEY WILL SAY?
NO ONE BUT YOU QUESTIONS IT. SHE IS TIKOTE'S EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT. SHE IS TRAINED TO KILL, DO YOU SUSPECT YOU WOULD FARE BETTER?
I DO NOT SUSPECT-- I KNOW.
SHE MAY BE TRAINED IN THE ART OF KILLING, BUT I AM BRED FOR IT.
COME...
...LET US SHOW THE CREW OF THE SEA VOYAGER THE TRUTH BEHIND MY WORDS.

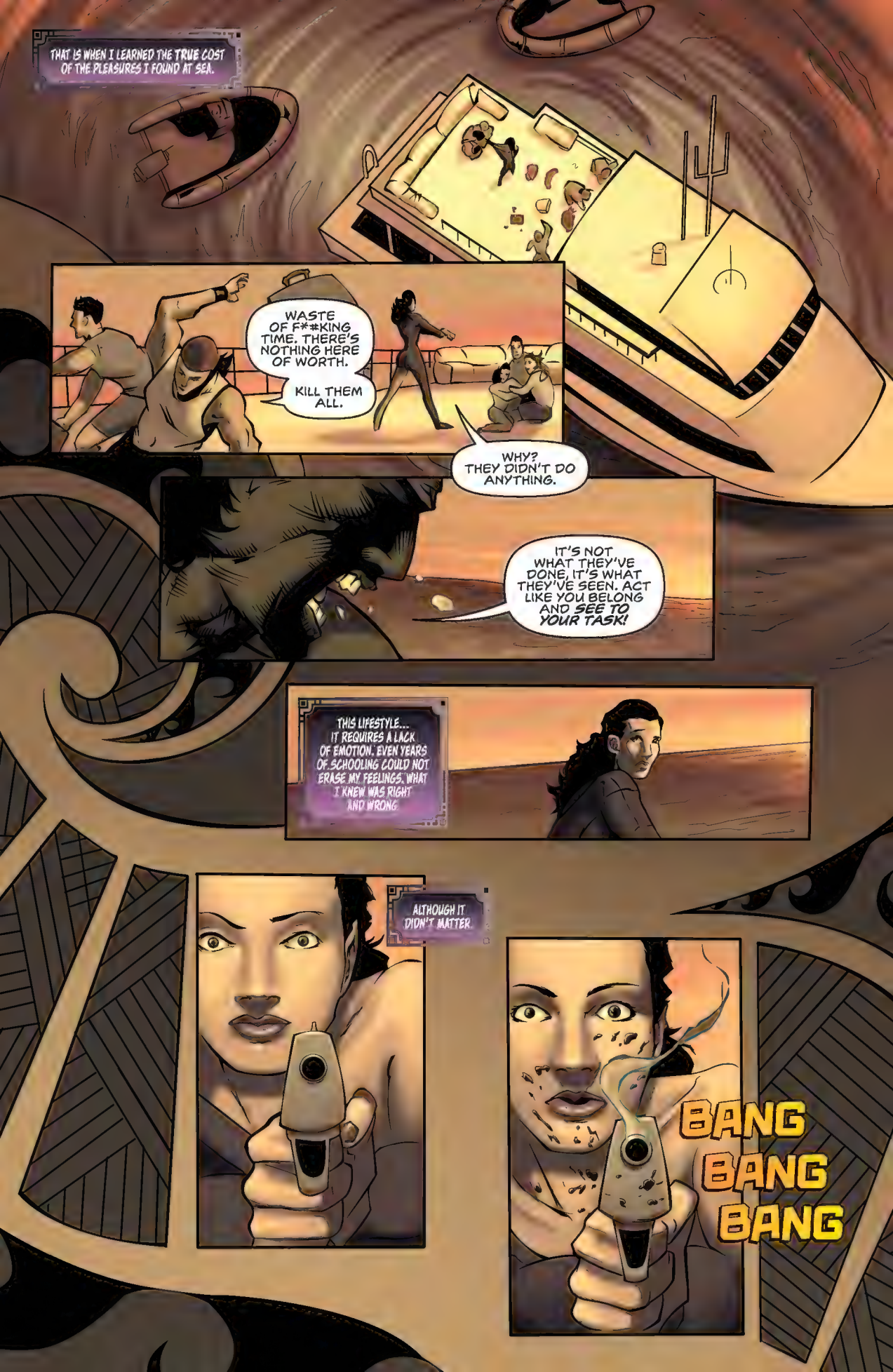

SOPHORA.
WHO--?
OH.
LANDON, DON'T STARTLE ME LIKE THAT.
I ASSUMED YOU'D BE UNAFRAID OF ALL INTRUDERS.
IS THAT WHAT YOU ARE, AN INTRUDER? PERHAPS I SHOULD SNAP YOUR NECK HERE AND NOW THEN.
I AM...
...WHATEVER YOU WANT ME TO BE.

I WANT YOU.
YOU JUST HAD ME.
I MEAN ALL OF YOU.
I WANT TO FREE YOU.
IT... IS NOT AN OPTION. TIKOTÉ IS MY MASTER, AND ALWAYS WILL BE.
WHATEVER FEELINGS YOU ARE DEVELOPING ARE FRUITLESS. I CANNOT LEAVE HIS SHADOW.
I LOVE YOU, SOPHORA. NOTHING IS FRUITLESS WHEN IT COMES TO YOU.
YOU DO NOT UNDERSTAND. YOUR LOVE DOES NOT GO UNRETURNED, BUT IF IT WEREN'T FOR TIKOTÉ, I WOULDN'T EVEN BE HERE...

I HAD SPENT SIXTEEN YEARS WITHIN THE WALLS OF THE SCHOOL, AND FINALLY SOMEONE CHOSE ME TO SERVE THEM.
AT FIRST, IT WASN'T WHAT I EXPECTED. I ASSUMED ALL MASTERS WERE OF AFFLUENT NATURE, A NECESSARY TRAIT FOR SUCH AN EXPENSIVE PURCHASE SUCH AS MY SERVITUDE.
HE WAS DIFFERENT. AND HE DIDN'T SPEAK TO ME AT FIRST.
...UNTIL WE REACHED IT.
...THE OCEAN.
I FELL IN LOVE INSTANTLY.


ONLY IN STOLEN PICTURES HAD I SEEN THE WATER, BUT NOW IT SURROUNDED ME EVERYWHERE I WENT.
I KNEW THE REST OF THE CREW BELIEVED ME A JOKE, BUT, I PAID NO MIND TO IT. I WAS UNDER THE CAPTAIN'S WATCH. I WAS READY TO SERVE HIM.
...READY TO KILL FOR HIM.
CLICK

MY SCHOOL WAS ONE OF THE BEST-- MY ABILITIES WERE FAR BETTER THAN ANY OF THE CREW.
BANG
BANG
BANG
I SOON BECAME OUR BEST WEAPON. OUR RIVALS NEVER SAW ME COMING.
AND I MADE SURE I WAS THE LAST THING THEY EVER SAW.
SOON, I HAD ELIMINATED ALL OF OUR MAJOR ADVERSARIES. THE OCEAN BELONGED TO US.


THAT IS WHEN I LEARNED THE TRUE COST OF THE PLEASURES I FOUND AT SEA.
WASTE OF F*#KING TIME. THERE'S NOTHING HERE OF WORTH.
KILL THEM ALL.
WHY? THEY DIDN'T DO ANYTHING.
IT'S NOT WHAT THEY'VE DONE, IT'S WHAT THEY'VE SEEN. ACT LIKE YOU BELONG AND SEE TO YOUR TASK!
THIS LIFESTYLE... IT REQUIRES A LACK OF EMOTION. EVEN YEARS OF SCHOOLING COULD NOT ERASE MY FEELINGS. WHAT I KNEW WAS RIGHT AND WRONG.
ALTHOUGH IT DIDN'T MATTER.
BANG BANG BANG

THE TEARS RETURNED THAT DAY.
MASTER... DID NOT SEEK TO PUNISH ME FOR MY WEAKNESS.
INSTEAD HE SHOWED COMPASSION.
HE TOLD ME I WAS HIS PRECIOUS FLOWER, AND HE WOULD NEVER ALLOW ANYTHING TO HAPPEN TO ME.
NOR DID HE EVER TRY.

HE IS MY MASTER, AND ALWAYS WILL BE.
WITHOUT HIM, I WOULD NEVER HAVE FOUND THE SEA. FOUND A NEW LIFE... FOUND YOU.
SO, YOU SEE, I CANNOT BETRAY THE TRUST HE HAS GIVEN ME. I AM SORRY.
SO AM I...
...BECAUSE I CANNOT LOVE YOU AS I DO, AND ALLOW HIM TO HAVE YOU.
EVEN IF IT MEANS MUTINY.
DO NOT SPEAK FOOLISH! DO YOU WISH TO SEE ME-- US-- BOTH DEAD?!
I ONLY SEEK OUR FREEDOM-- TOGETHER, NO MATTER WHAT THE COST.

THE NEXT NIGHT...
WE SUBDUE THE CREW FIRST, THEN MOVE ON THE SCORE, UNDERSTOOD?
FWOOK

IN SCHOOL, THEY TAUGHT US ABOUT HAZARD WARNINGS.
A HAZARD WARNING IS AN EXTRA SENSE BUILT UP OVER TIME, WHEN SOMETHING DOES NOT FEEL RIGHT ON A MISSION...
...WE ARE TAUGHT TO REGISTER AND RELY ON THIS SENSE TO THWART ANY PAINFUL SURPRISES.
...MINE HAS FAILED ME.
THIS SHIP IS EMPTY. THERE'S NO ONE--
CRACK

WAKE...
...MY FLOWER. I HAVE A SPECIAL SURPRISE FOR YOU.
NO!
JUDGING FROM YOUR REACTION, MY SUSPICIONS ARE NOT UNFOUNDED. HAVE I NOT BEEN LOYAL TO YOU ALL THIS TIME, SOPHORA?
YES, TIKOTÉ! YOU ARE A JUST AND FORGIVING MASTER. PLEASE DO NOT HURT HIM, HE HAS DONE NOTHING. IT IS ALL MY FAULT!
LIES. YOUR LOVER CONFESSED EVERYTHING WHILE YOU WERE OUT. HIS COURAGE IN THE FACE OF DEATH IS IMPRESSIVE, BUT ALSO HIS ULTIMATE SHORTCOMING.
BECAUSE NOW HIS PLANS FOR MUTINY ARE FINISHED-- AND HE WILL DIE...

...WITH YOUR HAND PULLING THE TRIGGER.
TO BE CONTINUED...

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The story so far

Executive Assistant Sophora's life as a pirate has finally caught up to her in deadly fashion. Her conscience has reached a breaking point, her secret love affair with Lotus has reached the surface, and Violet has set up an ambush aboard the Sea Voyager cargo vessel, leading Sophora with a brutal decision: kill her lover or be killed herself!

EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT: ASSASSINS

LOST AT SEA

PART 2 OF 2

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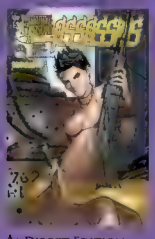
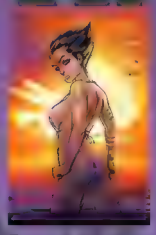


A: DIRECT EDITION
TONY PARKER
BETH SOTELO

B: DIRECT EDITION
ELIZABETH TORQUE



C: LONG BEACH COMIC CON EXCLUSIVE LIMITED EDITION OF 300
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PETER STEIGERWALD

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EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT: ASSASSINS™ Vol. 1 Issue 5

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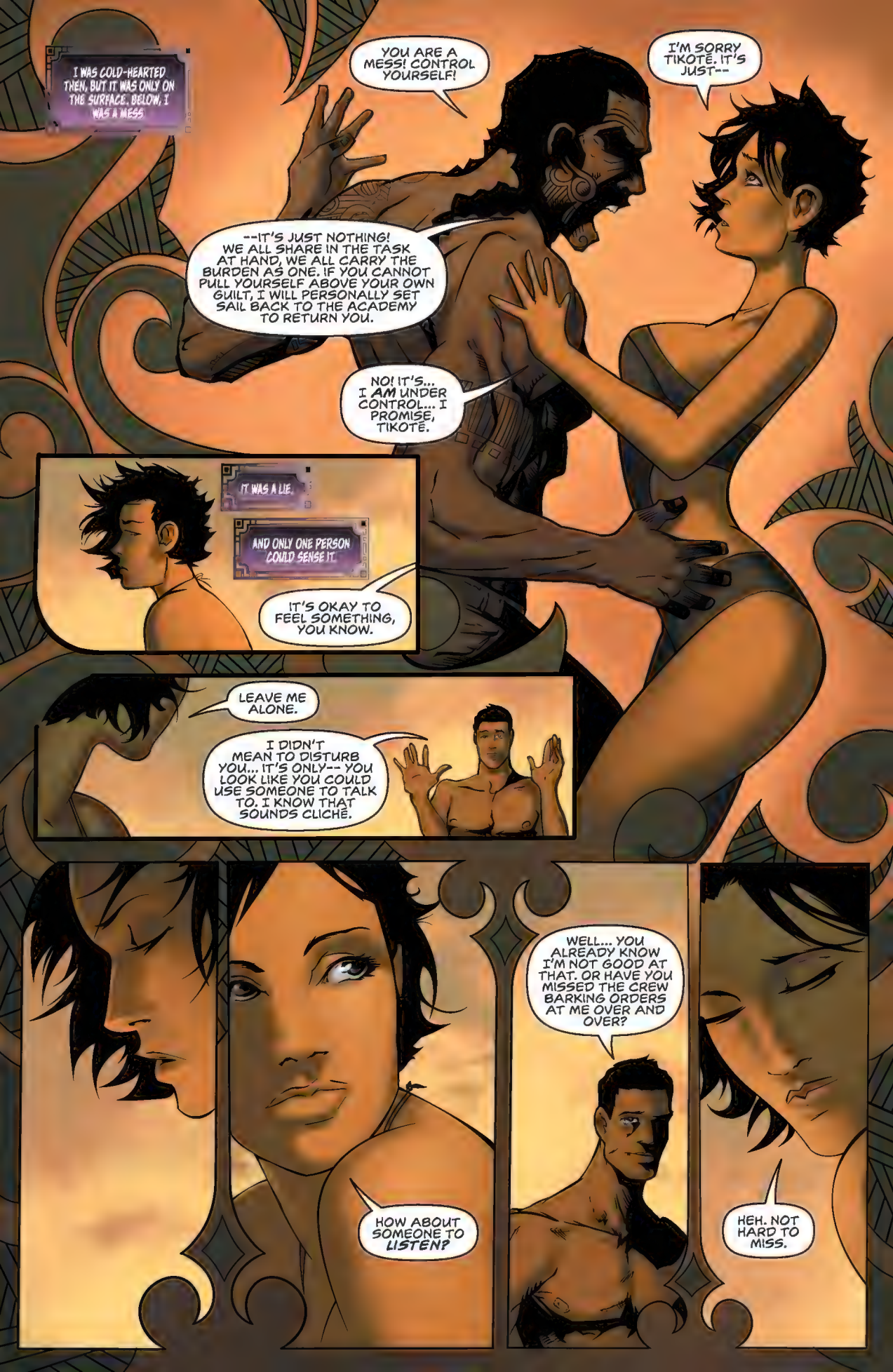
Now.
I ONCE BELIEVED SERVING YOUR MASTER WAS A TASK WITHOUT CONSCIENCE.
Then.
THAT IF I WERE GIVEN AN ORDER, I WOULD SIMPLY FOLLOW IT WITHOUT REGRET.
...I WAS WRONG.
THEY WERE A PAIR OF LOVERS IN THE WRONG PLACE AT THE WRONG TIME.
ILLEGAL STOWAWAYS ON A SHIP THEY HAD NO BUSINESS BEING ON. BUT, FATE MADE THEM WITNESSES.
FINISH IT.
BUT, TIKOTĒ--
--NOW!
PLEASE...
BANG BANG

AT THE ACADEMY, THEY TEACH YOU HOW TO BURY YOUR FEELINGS UNDER THE WEIGHT OF YOUR MASTER'S MOTIVES.
THEY TELL YOU THE ONLY THING THAT MATTERS IS THE SATISFACTION OF YOUR FUTURE EMPLOYER.
BUT, I AM NO FOOL.
I KNOW MY ACTIONS CARRY CONSEQUENCE. THAT GUILT CANNOT BE STRIPPED FROM ONE'S SOUL.
EVEN IF I ATTEMPTED TO DROWN IT FOR SO LONG.
I PROMISED MYSELF AT THAT MOMENT I WOULD NEVER ALLOW MY OWN FEELINGS TO CLOUD MY JUDGMENT.
TIKOTĒ FREED ME. INTRODUCED ME TO THIS LIFE AT SEA— A LIFE I LOVE.

...UNTIL WHAT I LOVE... SHIFTED.
MOVE IT, RECRUIT!
YEAH.
I IGNORED HIM AT FIRST, AS I DID EVERY NEW RECRUIT. MY DUTY DID NOT REQUIRE ANY SOCIAL STANDING-- IN FACT, TIKOTE PREFERRED I KEPT TO MYSELF.
LANDON'S ARRIVAL CHANGED...
...EVERYTHING.
BUT, HE WAS PERSISTENT.
I'VE SEEN YOU ON DECK. WE'VE YET TO FORMALLY MEET-- I'M LANDON. YOU'RE SOPHORA RIGHT?
I KNOW WHO YOU ARE, NEW FISH. AND SINCE YOU ALREADY KNOW ME...
...YOU MAY GO.
SLAM


I WAS COLD-HEARTED THEN, BUT IT WAS ONLY ON THE SURFACE. BELOW, I WAS A MESS.
YOU ARE A MESS! CONTROL YOURSELF!
I'M SORRY TIKOTÉ. IT'S JUST--
--IT'S JUST NOTHING! WE ALL SHARE IN THE TASK AT HAND, WE ALL CARRY THE BURDEN AS ONE. IF YOU CANNOT PULL YOURSELF ABOVE YOUR OWN GUILT, I WILL PERSONALLY SET SAIL BACK TO THE ACADEMY TO RETURN YOU.
NO! IT'S... I AM UNDER CONTROL... I PROMISE, TIKOTÉ.
IT WAS A LIE.
AND ONLY ONE PERSON COULD SENSE IT.
IT'S OKAY TO FEEL SOMETHING, YOU KNOW.
LEAVE ME ALONE.
I DIDN'T MEAN TO DISTURB YOU... IT'S ONLY-- YOU LOOK LIKE YOU COULD USE SOMEONE TO TALK TO. I KNOW THAT SOUNDS CLICHÉ.
HOW ABOUT SOMEONE TO LISTEN?
WELL... YOU ALREADY KNOW I'M NOT GOOD AT THAT. OR HAVE YOU MISSED THE CREW BARKING ORDERS AT ME OVER AND OVER?
HEH. NOT HARD TO MISS.

I FOUND HIM LISTENING MORE AND MORE TO WHAT I HAD TO SAY.
I'D NEVER BEEN ACCUSTOMED TO ANOTHER PERSON TAKING AN INTEREST IN ME.
IT WAS STIMULATING.
I HAD GROWN NUMB, FROZEN FROM MY MISDEEDS. BUT HE MADE ME FEEL AGAIN...I HAD NEVER FELT SUCH A FEELING BEFORE.
NOW, I KNOW WHAT A FOOL I WAS TO THINK IT COULD EVER END WELL.
SEE TO IT.
UNDERSTOOD, CAPTAIN.

Now.
A FOOL INDEED.
YOU CHOSE THIS FATE-- NOW DEAL WITH THE RESULT OF YOUR DECISION.
TIKOTÉ, PLEASE. I TRIED TO WARN HIM. TRIED TO GET HIM TO STOP BEFORE--
--TELL ME, SOPHORA. *HOW* AM I TO TRUST YOU FROM THIS POINT ON? I PRACTICALLY *RAISED* YOU. GAVE YOU NEW LIFE-- AND *THIS* IS THE REPAYMENT FOR MY ACTIONS? WHAT WOULD *YOU* DO?!
YOU'RE...
...RIGHT.
BANG

AGGHH!
BANG
KLINK
GET HER!!!
HE LEFT TWO BULLETS IN THE CHAMBER. EASY GUESS WHO THE SECOND BULLET WAS MEANT FOR.
I NEED TO THINK FAST. REMEMBER WHAT I WAS TRAINED FOR AT THE ACADEMY. WHAT I'VE LEARNED IN THE FIELD.
THK
THK
BUT FIRST, I NEED BETTER COVER.
BRAKAKAKAKA
ARGGGH!

I MUST DO SOMETHING. LANDON IS NOT TRAINED FOR THIS. HE WON'T MAKE IT.
YOU TWO! FIND HER!
I'LL HANDLE THE LOVER.
HE'S THIS WAY!
CRACK

GOT TO GET TO THE LOWER DECK OF THE SHIP. TIGHTER QUARTERS IF I HOPE TO SURVIVE.
SPLIT UP! I'LL TAKE THIS END. GRAB HER FLANK.
THEY'RE GOING TO TAKE BOTH ENDS OF THE SHIP AND TRY TO SQUEEZE ME OUT— IT'S WHAT I WOULD DO WITH PREY.
AND THAT IS WHAT I AM NOW, PREY. I MUST ACT ACCORDINGLY.
PERFECT.
CRACK
PSSSSSSSSSSHHHHHHHH

I NEED TO DISARM THE FIRST ONE, INCAPACITATE THEM WITH BRUTE FORCE.
SHIT.
GRRNN!
GANO-- WHAT ARE YOU DOING?!
HRRNGH... WHAT AM... I DOING?! YOU TWO ARE THE MUTINOUS ONES!
HOLD STILL!
THAT IS... NOT WHAT IS GOING ON! I'M NOT GOING TO HURT YOU!

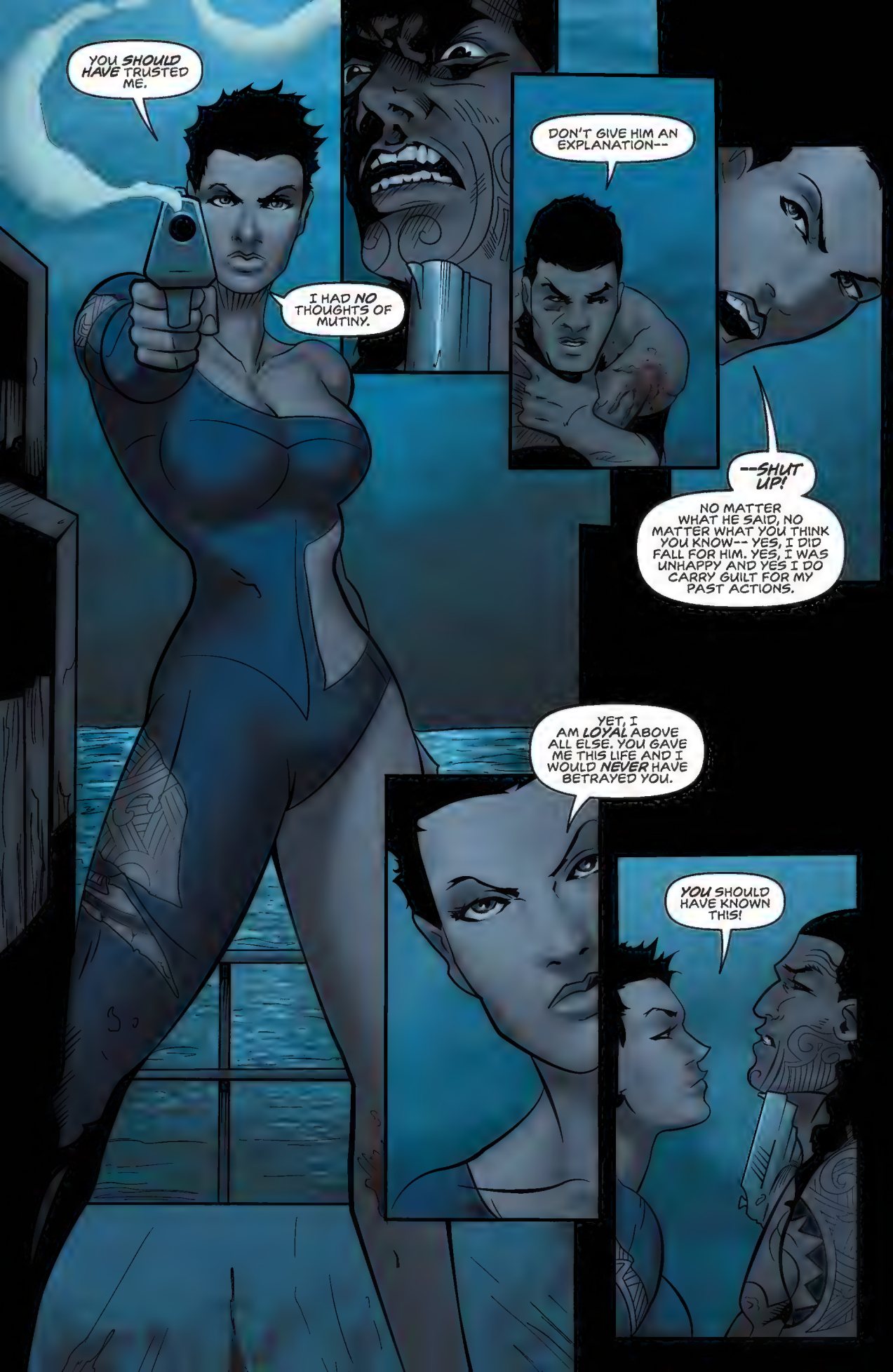
SMACK
THUD
ON YOUR FEET, GANO.
I'M -COUGH- UP.
IT'S TIME FOR YOU TO FINALLY DIE, WOMAN. THIS LIFE WAS NEVER MEANT FOR YOU.
ON YOUR FEET!
THIS IS HOW YOU ALWAYS IMAGINED IT WOULD END FOR ME, AM I RIGHT MARKEL?
IT MUST PLEASE YOU.
VERY MUCH SO.

NO!
BANG
FOOLISH BOY! WHAT IS YOUR PROBLEM?!
SHE IS MY... FRIEND!
YOU HAVE NO FRIENDS OUT HERE! YOU HAVE LOST YOUR WAY! YOU BOTH WILL--
THUK
---HNNHH!
YOU ARE THE ONE WHO HAS LOST HIS WAY, MARKEL. YOU PLACE THIS LIFESTYLE ABOVE THAT OF YOUR BROTHER'S LIFE. IT IS TIME YOU ARE TAUGHT THE FALSEHOOD OF YOUR CHOICES.
ENOUGH!

MY THOUGHTS EXACTLY!
WHACK
THOK
UNNGH!
THUD
YOU SHOULD'VE WATCHED OUR TRAINING...
CRASH
...IT WOULD'VE SAVED YOUR LIFE!
NO!

BANG
NO... GANO...
HRAA!
CRACK
...
I AM SORRY, GANO.

YOU CAN'T HIDE, TRAITOR!
BEHIND YOU, BOY!
KRUK
HRRRGH!
GRAB HIM!
YOUR LOVER--
--IS DEAD! AND SOON, YOU WILL SHARE HER--
BANG
WHAT?!


YOU SHOULD HAVE TRUSTED ME.
I HAD NO THOUGHTS OF MUTINY.
DON'T GIVE HIM AN EXPLANATION--
--SHUT UP!
NO MATTER WHAT HE SAID, NO MATTER WHAT YOU THINK YOU KNOW-- YES, I DID FALL FOR HIM. YES, I WAS UNHAPPY AND YES I DO CARRY GUILT FOR MY PAST ACTIONS.
YET, I AM LOYAL ABOVE ALL ELSE. YOU GAVE ME THIS LIFE AND I WOULD NEVER HAVE BETRAYED YOU.
YOU SHOULD HAVE KNOWN THIS!

IT IS OVER... END IT, NOW.
NO...
...I AM NOT YOU. I WILL NOT KILL YOU. THAT WOULD BE TOO EASY-- AND ONLY ADD TO MY REMORSE.
I AM BETTER THAN THAT!
AHHHH!
SPLASH
YOU LET HIM GO... WHY?
I ONCE BELIEVED SERVING YOUR MASTER WAS A TASK WITHOUT CONSCIENCE...

LATER...
...AND I WAS RIGHT.
THAT IS WHY I NO LONGER SERVE ANYONE.
MY ACTIONS LED TO THIS...
...BECAUSE I WAS NOT IN CONTROL OF THEM-- PEOPLE DIED. GOOD PEOPLE WHO DESERVED A BETTER FATE. I WILL NEVER MAKE THE SAME MISTAKE AGAIN.
IT IS TIME FOR A CHANGE.

SOME TIME LATER...
MAPLE
C
-YAWN-
SOPHORA?
IT WASN'T AN EASY CHOICE TO LEAVE THEM BOTH BEHIND.
TO ABANDON EVERYTHING I HELD DEAR.
BUT, THAT IS WHAT THEY DON'T TEACH YOU IN THE ACADEMY. WHAT YOU MUST LEARN BY YOURSELF. TO LIVE ON YOUR OWN, YOU MUST BE WILLING TO BE ALONE.

...IN ORDER TO TRULY BE FREE.
END.

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Vince HERNANDEZ
Jordan GUNDERSON
Mark ROSLAN
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#6

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The story so far...

Previously in "Life After Death" Executive Assistant Lily thought that fighting her way free from the demons of her past [illegible] ate her to a new life [illegible] however Lily has found that [illegible] no easy feat--especially [illegible] wealthy arms dealer named [illegible] looking to wipe out her [illegible]

EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT: ASSASSINS

EXECUTIVE EXTINCTION

PART 1 OF 5

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JOSH REED

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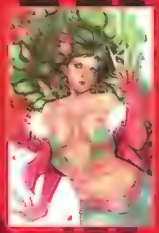

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[illegible] 1888-COMIC-BOOK [illegible] CHRISTINE MEYER [illegible]

TOKYO, JAPAN.
HE WAS ONE OF OUR ASSOCIATES, YES. HE WAS A GOOD MAN.
THE PANCAKED GUY DEAD ON THE PAVEMENT WORKED FOR A POWER PLAYER NAMED MAZUTSU.
THAT SAME POWER PLAYER ALSO WANTS ME TAKEN OUT AS WELL. HE'S TRIED TWICE BEFORE-- THE DEAD BODY ON THE GROUND REPRESENTING HIS SECOND FAILED ATTEMPT.
HOW WELL DID YOU KNOW HIM, MISS?
VERY. WE BOTH WORKED FOR THE SAME EMPLOYER. HE WAS LIKE A BROTHER TO ME.
MY BOSS WILL NOT TAKE THIS WELL.
BRING BRING

I MUST TAKE THIS. PLEASE EXCUSE ME.
NOT A PROBLEM. WE'LL BE IN TOUCH.
OF COURSE. ANYTHING I CAN DO TO HELP, PLEASE DO NOT HESITATE TO ASK.
SIR.
YES, IT IS TARVER... HE SUFFERED SEVER BRAIN CONTUSIONS FROM THE FALL. DIED ON IMPACT.
YES, SIR. I UNDERSTAND.
A WOMAN I KNOW ALL TOO WELL.
I NEED TO GET TO MAZUTSU BEFORE HE MAKES HIS THIRD ATTEMPT ON ME—AND LILAC IS THE KEY.

LONDON, ENGLAND
I FAILED YOU.
VIVIAN
WILSHIRE
I SHOULD HAVE PROTECTED YOU AS A MOTHER, AS MY ONLY DAUGHTER. INSTEAD I INTRODUCED YOU TO THIS LIFE-- AND LED YOU TO THIS.
I CAN'T MAKE AMENDS FOR THE PAST, FOR WHAT HAS LED TO THIS POINT... BUT, I PROMISE...
I WILL RIGHT THE PRESENT.
NELSON
1783

TOKYO, JAPAN.
LATER THAT NIGHT.
DON'T MOVE!
I'M IMPRESSED. MY SECURITY MEASURES ARE QUITE ADVANCED AND REQUIRE GREAT SKILL TO OVERCOME, EVEN FOR AN EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT--
--ESPECIALLY ONE OF MY WORST STUDENTS.
THE TECH IS MORE ADVANCED TO BREAK, BUT THE THEORY'S STILL THE SAME. IT JUST REQUIRES PATIENCE AND PLANNING. YOU TAUGHT ME THAT AS WELL, SO REALLY, YOU SHOULD BE PROUD.
YOUR LESSON STUCK.
DON'T FORGET-- I HAD YOU EXPELLED FOR A REASON.
LOOK AT YOU, YOU'RE A FAILURE. TWO ACADEMIES, TWO CHANCES TO SUCCEED AND YOU WERE BANISHED FROM BOTH. YOU COULD NOT EVEN PROTECT YOUR MASTER AND CAN BARELY PROTECT YOURSELF!
AND NOW YOU *THINK* YOU HAVE OUTSMARTED ME, BUT YOU HAVE FORGOTTEN--

--I AM THE TEACHER!
GRRRAAAWR
...
SILLY GIRL.
-CRAASH
LILAC, THE BITCH WITH THE SWORD, IS MY FORMER HEADMASTER AT THE EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT ACADEMY THAT I BRIEFLY ATTENDED-- BEFORE I WAS KICKED OUT.
HOW DO I ALWAYS GET MYSELF INTO THESE SITUATIONS?
GRRRRRRR
GOOD BOY. SHOW HER WHAT WE DO TO INTRUDERS!
GRRRRRRR
AND THIS DOG, WELL, IT JUST WANTS TO RIP MY THROAT OUT.

NNNNNGHH... SORRY...
BANG
BITCH!
THE DOG'S DEATH-- THAT'S ON YOU.
YOU'RE DEATH-- THAT'LL BE ON ME!
BANG

SHE SERVES AND PROTECTS A GUY NAMED MAZUTSU, AN ARMS DEALER WITH INFINITE RESOURCES.

CHING

SHINK

TO SAY HE WANTS ME DEAD IS AN UNDERSTATEMENT.

THUNK

SO, I FIGURED I WOULD SAVE THEM BOTH THE TROUBLE AND FIND HER FIRST.

BANG

MAYBE I SHOULD HAVE THOUGHT THIS ALL THROUGH BEFOREHAND, THOUGH.

THUD

YOU CANNOT DEFEAT ME ALONE, LILY. I AM TOO WELL TRAINED.

CRACK

SHIIIING

HRAAAAAH!

YEAH, THAT WOULD'VE BEEN A BETTER IDEA.

CRINK
FWACK
UNGH!
YOU DON'T... NGGH... HAVE TO DIE FOR HIM! JUST... TELL ME WHERE MAZUTSU IS!
FOOL! AFTER ALL THIS TIME... HNNNH... YOU STILL KNOW NOTHING OF WHAT IT MEANS TO BE AN EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT!
CRACK
AHHHH!
IT MEANS DOING WHATEVER IT TAKES TO OVERCOME YOUR ADVERSARY!

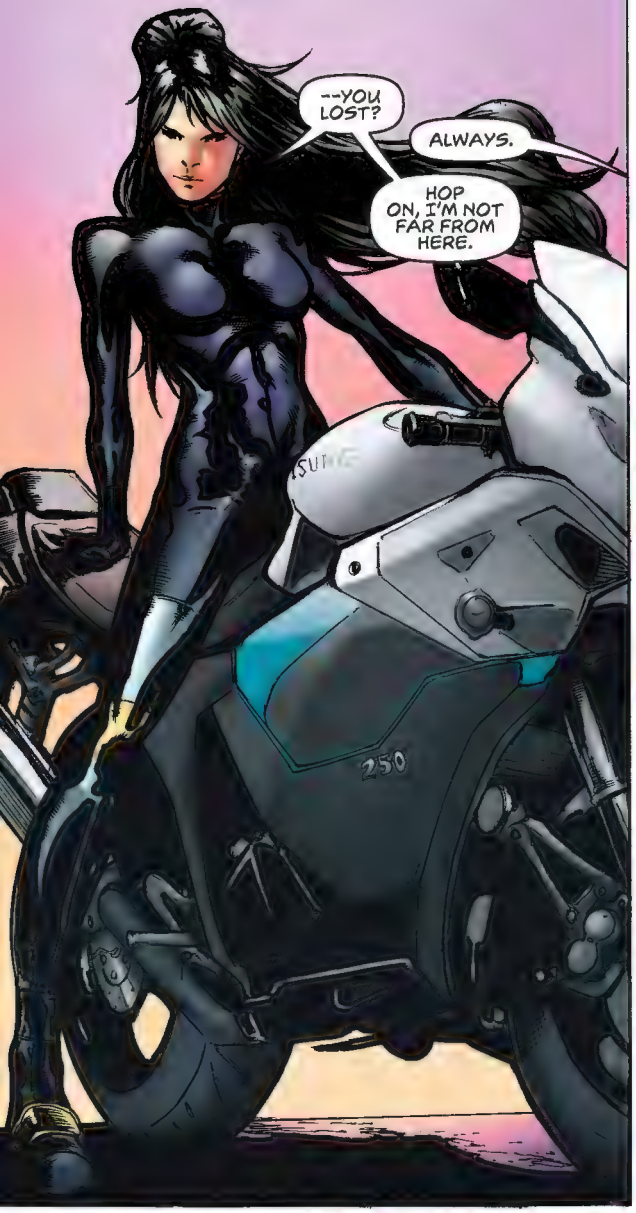
-:GASP!:- YOU--
--HAVE NO...
...IDEA...
ARRRRRGGGGGHHH!!!
UNNH!
CRAAAASH

AHHHHHHHH!
...WHAT I'VE HAD TO OVERCOME.

TOKYO, JAPAN.
THE FIRING CHAMBER IS STILL NOT REACTING WITH THE RECOIL AS WE'D HOPED, BUT WE'RE CERTAIN IT WILL BE READY FOR PROTOTYPE TESTING BY THE END OF THE WEEK.
MAKE SURE THAT IT IS.
BEEP BEEP BEEP
YES.
YOUR GIRL IS DEAD. I THOUGHT YOU SHOULD HEAR IT FROM ME FIRST.
LILY, I PRESUME. SO, WE FINALLY SPEAK. YOU ARE QUICKLY BECOMING MORE TROUBLE THAN YOU ARE WORTH. LILAC WAS A VALUABLE ASSET TO ME.
THEN GIVE UP. YOU'LL NEVER FIND ME.
AH, BUT YOU SEE, THAT IS WHERE YOU ARE INCORRECT. YOU MAY HAVE KILLED LILAC... AS WELL AS TARVER, BUT TO MISTAKE ME FOR ONE OF THEM WOULD BE A GROSS MISCALCULATION.

I WILL NEVER STOP HUNTING YOU-- OR YOUR KIND.
LILAC WAS SIMPLY A MEANS TO AN END. HER DEATH WAS AN EVENTUALITY AS YOURS IS AS WELL. YOU EXECUTIVE ASSISTANTS ALL SHARE A SIMILAR FATE. YOU ARE WEAPONS TO BE USED AS I SEE FIT.
YOU'LL NEVER CONTROL US-- VILLONE TRIED THAT AND IT EARNED HIM A BULLET IN THE TEMPLE.
MEANS TO AN END.
I ALREADY DO CONTROL YOU, LILY. YOU JUST HAVE YET TO REALIZE IT.
YOU'RE NEXT-- COUNT ON IT. I'M COMING FOR YOU.
I LOOK FORWARD TO THE CHALLENGE.
APOLOGIES FOR THE INTERRUPTION, PLEASE CONTINUE.

NEW YORK CITY.
I HAVEN'T BEEN TO THE STATES IN AWHILE. HATE IT HERE-- ESPECIALLY THIS TOWN AND THESE PEOPLE.
HARD TO FIND ANYONE TO TRUST.
PAINTING
LOWER EAST SIDE.
BUT THE TRUTH IS I CAN'T TAKE OUT MAZUTSU ALONE, EVEN IF I WANT TO.
I'M GONNA NEED HELP.
SCREEEEECH
HEY--


--YOU LOST?
ALWAYS.
HOP ON, I'M NOT FAR FROM HERE.
250

ZOOOOOOOOM

THANKS FOR THE RIDE, IRIS. SO... THIS IS WHERE YOU STAY NOW?
TEMPORARILY. I MOVE AROUND QUITE OFTEN THESE DAYS. IT'S... BEST IF I KEEP ON THE GO.
HEH. I KNOW THAT LIFESTYLE WELL.

HOW ARE YOU, LILY? REALLY?

THAT'S ACTUALLY WHY I'M HERE. THINGS HAVEN'T GONE EXACTLY AS PLANNED SINCE WE TOOK CARE OF VILLONE... SINCE I'VE BEEN ON MY OWN.
THEY RARELY DO.

DING
HAVE YOU SEEN ROSE LATELY?
NOT SINCE VILLONE'S DEATH. SHE HAS MUCH SHE NEEDS TO SORT OUT, I IMAGINE.
YEAH...
...I SEE YOU'RE STILL KEEPING UP APPEARANCES.
WHY ARE YOU HERE, LILY? YOU'RE OBVIOUSLY IN TROUBLE, SO TELL ME.
SOMEONE WANTS ME DEAD, IRIS. SOMEONE WITH CONSIDERABLE RESOURCES AT HIS DISPOSAL TO MAKE IT HAPPEN. I'VE ALREADY TAKEN OUT SEVERAL OF HIS PEOPLE-- AS WELL AS HIS EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT, LILAC...
...BUT... I CAN'T REACH HIM ALONE.
MAZUTSU.

HOW DO... YOU KNOW HIM?
COME. I'LL SHOW YOU.
F@*K ME.
YOUR NEW MASTER MUST BE LOADED.
WELL, THAT'S JUST IT-- MY NEW EMPLOYER IS NOT A MASTER AT ALL...
...BUT AN AGENCY.
THAT'S HOW I KNOW ABOUT MAZUTSU. HE HAS A FILE AN INCH THICK.
OH--

NOOO.
LILY-- WAIT!
AT LEAST LET ME EXPLAIN WHY I'M WORKING WITH THEM. I THINK WE CAN HELP--
SORRY, IRIS. BESIDES THE TRUST ISSUES I HAVE WITH THEM, THE LAST PERSON FROM THE CIA WHO HELPED ME OUT ENDED UP DEAD.
THIS IS A DIFFERENT SITUATION. BELIEVE ME!
LOOK, YOU DON'T HAVE TO EXPLAIN. WE ALL NEEDED TO FIND OUR WAY AFTER WHAT HAPPENED-- I GET IT.
BUT I PLAN TO KILL MAZUTSU, AND I CAN'T HAVE THAT TYPE OF HEAT AROUND ME. NOT NOW.
I HOPE YOU UNDERSTAND.
WAIT! YOU NEED TO KNOW--!
DAMMIT!

SHINJUKU DISTRICT, COUNTY MORGUE.
1 DAY EARLIER.
I'M SURPRISED YOU ACCEPTED MY INVITATION TO MEET HERE--
--AMONGST THE DEAD.
I CAME TO PAY MY RESPECTS TO LILAC...
...AND OFFER MY SERVICES.
I MUST WARN YOU, EVERY ASSOCIATE BEFORE YOU MET THE SAME FATE AS THIS TRYING TO KILL HER.
YES, BUT I HAVE SOMETHING THEY DON'T--

--I HAVE HER TRUST.
TO BE CONTINUED...

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COVER B

The story so far...

After finding and killing Lilac, Mazutsu's Executive Assistant Lily journeyed to New York City seeking the help of Iris, one of her few remaining allies. How [illegible] discovered their paths are set [illegible] directions once more when Iris [illegible] new works for the CIA. Choosing to continue her search alone, Lily is [illegible] are that another of her old allies, Rose [illegible] the hunt as well—and she is the target.

EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT: ASSASSINS

EXECUTIVE EXTINCTION

PART 2 OF 5

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THOSE EYES...
CENTRAL PARK ZOO.
...I SEE FIERCENESS IN THEM. UNADULTERATED HUNGER FOR BLOOD.
WE ARE THE SAME.
ARE WE?
I MEANT THE LEOPARD AND I. NOT YOU AND I.
YOU EXECUTIVE ASSISTANTS, THESE DAYS. YOU'VE FORGOTTEN THE HONOR AND DISCIPLINE INVOLVED IN THE ACT. WHAT IT MEANS TO BE THE PREDATOR. IT'S A SHAME, REALLY.

I DIDN'T ASK YOU TO MEET ME FOR A LECTURE. I'VE HAD PLENTY OF THOSE BEFORE. I WANTED TO--
--YOU CAME TO ASK ME FOR MY HELP. DON'T WASTE YOUR BREATH TRYING TO EXPLAIN IT ANOTHER WAY.
THAT'S NOT IT. I MEAN... YES, I DO NEED HELP. BUT, I CAME TO YOU BECAUSE YOU UNDERSTAND SACRIFICE. WHAT IT MEANS TO LOSE EVERYTHING. VIOLET WAS AN ALLY TO ME AS WELL, DON'T FORGET.
IS THAT WHAT YOU THINK? THAT I WANT TO SPILL BLOOD FOR BLOOD? THAT AVENGING MY DAUGHTER'S DEATH WILL GIVE ME SOME TYPE OF CATHARTIC CLOSURE?
NO, LOOK ASTER, I DON'T EXPECT YOU TO--
--BECAUSE YOU'D BE RIGHT. I DO WANT REVENGE. I WANT THE PEOPLE WHO PUT MY DAUGHTER IN THE GROUND TO FEEL THE SAME PAIN SHE DID.
DUNCAN VILLONE-- DID HE HAVE ASSOCIATES?
I CAN DO YOU ONE BETTER.
WE CAN TELL YOU WHO WAS PULLING HIS STRINGS.

ORCHID?
YOU'RE MIXED UP IN THIS ALSO?
I HAVE MY REASONS. MY MIND... THE MICRO CHIP, SINCE IT WAS REMOVED--
Crocodile
--WELL, LET'S JUST SAY I NEED TO FIND ANSWERS TO WHAT THE HELL THEY PUT IN ME, OR I'LL NEVER BE THE SAME AGAIN.
SO VILLONE? HE WASN'T THE MAN AT THE TOP?
HARDLY.
CAN IT EVER JUST BE BLACK AND WHITE? I GROW TIRED OF LIVING IN THE GRAY.
IT CAN. AND THIS IS YOUR CHANCE. I'M BEING HUNTED BY HIS BOSS, A MAN NAMED MAZUTSU. AND QUITE FRANKLY-- WE ALL ARE. NO SOONER WILL HE BE DONE WITH ME BEFORE HE COMES LOOKING FOR YOU TWO.
THIS IS OUR ONLY OPPORTUNITY TO TAKE IT TO HIM, BEFORE IT'S TOO LATE. ORCHID CAN GET HER ANSWERS. YOU CAN GET CLOSURE.
BUT, WE NEED YOUR HELP, ASTER. YOU'RE MORE SKILLED THAN ALL OF US.
WE CAN'T DO IT WITHOUT YOU.

THESE ARE THE ONES I'VE PRIORITIZED.
WAS I ON THIS PRIORITY LIST, AS WELL?

YOU WERE. UNTIL I KNEW I COULD TRUST YOU.
AND *NOW* YOU DO?

OF COURSE. MY HARDWARE RARELY FAILS. VILLONE MIGHT HAVE RUN INTO HIS SHARE OF DIFFICULTIES, BUT *THAT* IS THE IMPORTANCE OF FIELD TESTING. BUT, THE NEW CHIP...

...I HAVE *NO DOUBTS* OF ITS FUNCTIONALITY.

AND, IF I ACCOMPLISH WHAT YOU WANT, YOU WILL REMOVE IT ONCE AND FOR ALL?
I GIVE YOU MY WORD.
I DON'T KNOW IF THAT GIVES ME RELIEF OR FEAR.

I TAKE OFFENSE TO THAT. MY LOYALTY TO MY PEOPLE HAS NEVER BEEN QUESTIONED. IF YOU HELP ME TAKE THE REST OF THEM OUT, I WILL RETURN THE FAVOR IN KIND-- WELL, YOUR CHIP I MEAN. NOT *YOU.*
NOW... WE MUST DECIDE WHICH OF THEM WILL GO FIRST.
WELL, OBVIOUSLY THEY ARE ALL DANGEROUS IN THEIR OWN REGARD, BUT *HER*-- SHE COULD BE A HUGE PROBLEM.
THE GIRLS WILL MOST LIKELY LOOK TO GROUP UP, CONSIDERING OUR INTEL TELLS US LILY IS IN THE STATES.
BUT, THEY WILL NEED CONSIDERABLE RESOURCES TO ATTEMPT TO FIGHT BACK. WE MUST FIRST DEBILITATE THEIR CAPABILITIES. IN THAT REGARD...

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-:SIGH:-
<WHAT IS THE MATTER, MY DEAR?>
*EDITOR'S NOTE: TRANSLATED FROM HINDI.
THUMP
<WHO HAS RILED YOU SO?>
SHIT!
CLINK
CLINK
-:COUGH COUGH!:-

YOUR STUN GRENADES ARE VERY ADVANCED-- IMPRESSIVE.
DON'T MOVE.
YOU REALLY THINK I'M GOING TO FOLLOW THAT ADVICE?
NO--
--BUT IT SLOWED YOU DOWN ENOUGH!
FWICK
AHHHHHH!
WAIT... THIS DAGGER--

--ROSE?!?
IT'S GOOD TO SEE YOU, LOTUS. I THOUGHT I'D MAKE IT A SURPRISE ENTRANCE. I DO LOVE SURPRISES.
BUT-- WHY ARE YOU DOING THIS?!
DOES IT MATTER? WHAT DID YOU THINK? ALL OF US ASSASSINS WOULD ALWAYS GET ALONG? BE ONE HAPPY FAMILY? IRIS COULD BE OUR MOTHER? C'MON. YOU KNOW HOW THE GAME IS PLAYED. WE GO TO THE HIGHEST BIDDER. IT'S WHAT WE DO. NOT ALL OF US ARE MADE OF MONEY.
BITCH. I NEVER TRUSTED YOU TO BEGIN WITH. YOU THINK YOUR SCHOOLING WILL HELP YOU AGAINST A REAL ASSASSIN...?
I WAS BORN INTO THIS!

HYAAA!
HERE, BOY! DINNER!
GRRROWWWL
YEEE

I DON'T NEED TRICKS TO PUT *YOU* IN THE GROUND!

CRACK

--I AM A PROFESSIONAL!

YES, BUT--

I TOLD YOU--

SMACK

AHHH!

--IN SCHOOL, WE TAKE *NOTES!*

DON'T WORRY YOUR PRETTY LITTLE HEAD OFF, IT WILL ONLY DEBILITATE YOU. TAINT YOUR SENSE OF MOVEMENT.
I WANT THE JOY OF KILLING YOU *MYSELF.*
CHING
ARGGGH!
WHO...?

DID YOU SEE THAT THROW? I STILL GOT IT.
I COULD'VE HIT THAT SHOT AS WELL.
LET'S SEE YOU TRY.
LADIES, DID YOU FORGET WHAT THE OBJECTIVE IS HERE?

WELL LOOK AT THIS, A REUNION?
HAVE YOU LOST YOUR MIND, ROSE? LOTUS CAME TO OUR AID-- HELPED YOU WHEN WE TOOK ON VILLONE!
I... DON'T NEED YOUR HELP.
THAT'S NOT HOW IT LOOKS TO ME.
YOU THINK I'M FRIGHTENED BY A JUNKIE, AN ELDERLY WOMAN AND DRUG DEALER'S LACKEY?
LET'S END THIS.

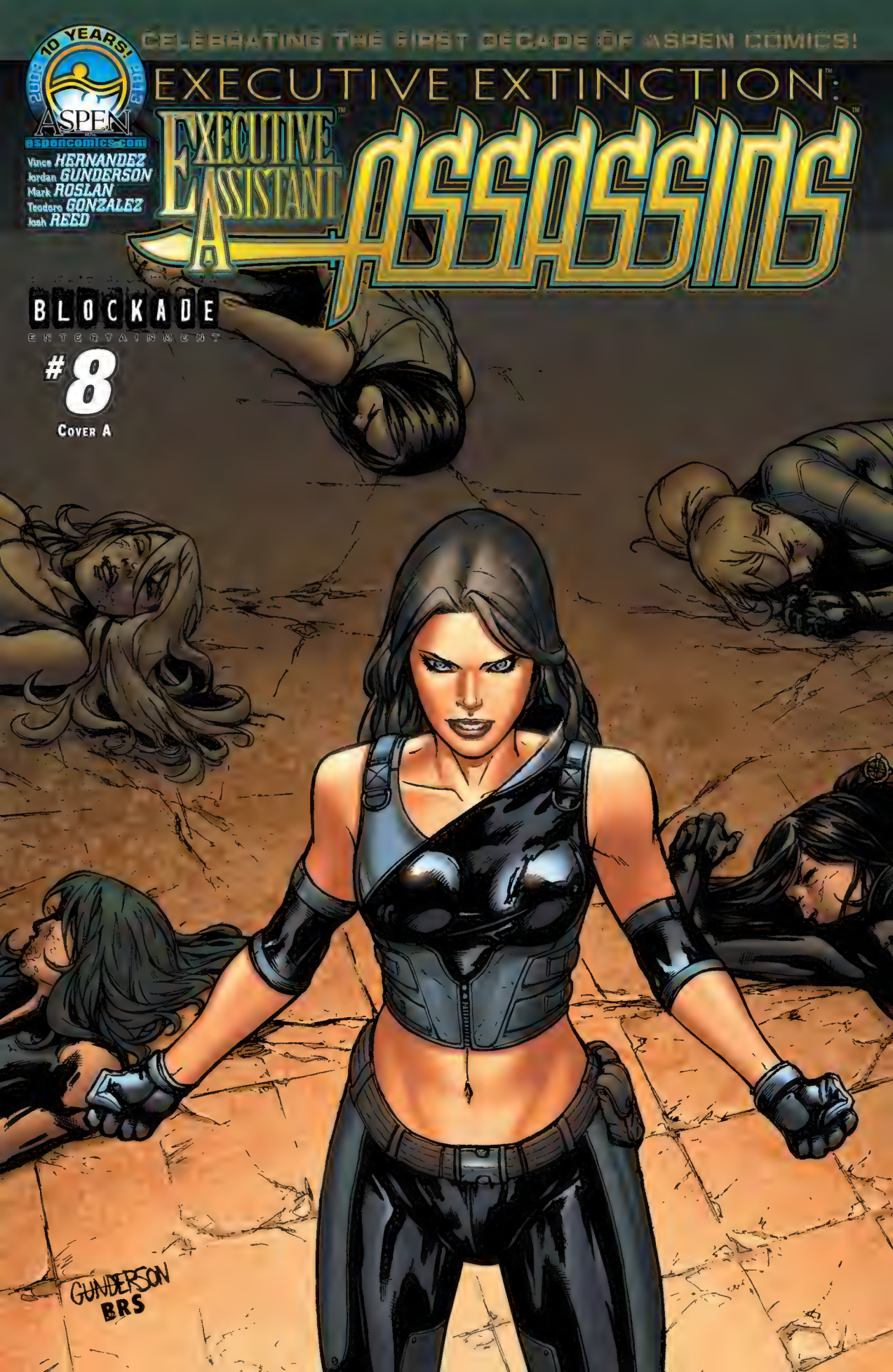
HRAAAAAAH!
WHOOOOSH
AHHHH!
ASTER!
TOO SLOW, OLD LADY!
UNNNGH!
NOT SO FAST!
RAAAAH!

I FORGOT YOU FIGHT DIRTY, LILY. OLD HABITS DIE HARD.
WELL, YOU KNOW WHAT THEY SAY--
--IF IT AIN'T *BROKE!*
DID SHE BREAK ANYTHING?!
I'LL BE FINE. *GET* THE BITCH, WOULD YOU?
MY PLEASURE.

-:HUHHHHH!:-
THUNK
YOU'RE NOT THE ONLY ONE WHO CAN PLAY IN THE MUD.
LUCKY KICK BEFORE! NOT THIS TIME!
SWOOSH
CRACK
UNNNGHH!
FU--

THUD
URRGGHH!
OWWW! BITCH!
YOU HAVE A LOT TO LEARN, NOVICE!
TOO BAD YOU'RE OUT OF TIME!
BANG
ROSE!!!

PUT HER DOWN, OR THE NEXT SHOT IS THROUGH YOUR TEMPLE.
TO BE CONTINUED...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GUNDERSON
BRS

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The story so far...

Upon the orders of Mazutsu, Executive Assistant Rose attempted to ambush the skilled assassin Lotus while she slept at her mansion hideaway in Alwar, India. After a bl[illegible] survival ensued. Rose was [illegible] arrival of Lily, Orchid and Arr[illegible] to the aid of Lotus. Yet even with [illegible] able to use less-than honorable tactics in order to get the upper hand. However, her fortune quickly changed when her old nemesis Iris returned to put a stop to the fighting--by gunpoint...

EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT: ASSASSINS

EXECUTIVE EXTINCTION

PART 3 OF 5

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[illegible] 1888-COMIC-BOOK [illegible] CHRISTINE MEYER [illegible]

ROSE, YOU HAVE ONE SECOND TO GET OFF OF HER.
IRIS... OF COURSE. NATURALLY.
YOU HAVE SUCH A KNACK FOR DRAMATIC ARRIVALS.
I THOUGHT YOU HAD GIVEN UP THIS FOOLISH VENDETTA AFTER WHAT WE'VE BEEN THROUGH.
OR AT THE VERY LEAST GIVEN UP TRYING TO KILL THE ONLY ALLIES YOU COULD POSSIBLY HAVE.
A BUNCH OF ASSASSINS WITH BAGGAGE? YOU CALL YOURSELVES MY ALLIES? GET REAL, IRIS. WE PLAY FOR KEEPS IN THIS BUSINESS. YOU SHOULD KNOW THAT BETTER THAN ANYONE. OR HAVE YOU TOLD ALL OF THEM EXACTLY WHO IT IS YOU WORK FOR? THERE'S NO ROOM FOR FRIENDSHIP ANYMORE. NOT WITH OUR KIND.
WHO-- MAZUTSU?! IS THAT WHY YOU TRIED TO KILL LOTUS AND ALL OF US? ARE WE NEXT ON YOUR LIST, YOU F*@KING BITCH?!
EASY, LILY.
OH, PLEASE. THE POSTER CHILD FOR SALVATION SPEAKS UP. DON'T LECTURE ME, LILY. HE'S GIVEN ME A NEW LIFE AGAIN. PURPOSE.
DO YOU EVEN KNOW WHAT THAT WORD MEANS?
I WORK FOR THE HIGHEST BIDDER, PLAIN AND SIMPLE.
IF IT MEANS TAKING OUT SOME OF THE GARBAGE FROM MY PAST LIFE-- THEN SO BE IT!
AND I THOUGHT I WAS A BITCH.
DIFFERENT DEGREES.

WELL, YOU'RE ONE PIECE OF TRASH THAT'S NOT LEAVING ON YOUR OWN ACCORD.
LET'S TAKE HER INSIDE.
SO, I'M A HOSTAGE NOW?
ROSE, "HOSTAGE" IS SUCH A... POLITICALLY INCORRECT TERM. MY CURRENT EMPLOYER WOULD CALL YOU OUR GUEST.
AS A MATTER OF FACT, PLEASE ALLOW ME TO SHOW YOU SOME OF THE VARIOUS FORMS OF HOSPITALITY I'VE RECENTLY LEARNED. IT'S AMAZING WHAT TRICKS THEY'VE COME UP WITH.
YOU'VE HEARD OF WATERBOARDING BEFORE I PRESUME?
TORTURE, IRIS? NOT REALLY YOUR STYLE. BUT IF THAT'S YOUR GAME YOU'LL FIND I CAN PLAY LONGER THAN MOST.
YOU DIDN'T LET ME FINISH.
I'M SURE SHE KNOWS PLENTY ABOUT TRICKS.
NOW, NOW.
LOTUS, DO YOU HAVE A TUBE... OR HOSE? ASTER, WOULD YOU BRING AS MANY JUGS OF WATER AS YOU CAN SPARE, PLEASE?
ON IT.
DONE.
WHAT I HAVE IN MIND IS MUCH WORSE.
IRIS...

YOU'RE RIGHT. WATERBOARDING IS NO FUN FOR ANYONE. IT ALSO MAKES A HUGE MESS...
...NO... I PREFER TO KEEP THE MESS MORE... CONTAINED. DID YOU KNOW THERE'S SUCH A THING AS WATER INTOXICATION? FORCED INGESTION OVER TIME EVENTUALLY LEADS TO INTENSE BRAIN SWELLING, SEIZURES AND... EVENTUALLY... DEATH.
IRIS-- COME ON.
TELL US WHERE AND HOW WE CAN GET TO MAZUTSU.
YOU DON'T WANT TO DO THIS.
OF COURSE I DON'T. BUT, I WILL. HE'S *THAT* IMPORTANT TO US. THE MAN NEEDS TO GO AWAY. PLUS, I CAN'T STAND TO SEE MY FRIENDS HURT, EITHER.
I'VE NEVER HAD A FRIEND BEFORE.
IT'S OVERRATED.
TOTALLY.
DON'T MAKE ME DO THIS, ROSE.

DO WHAT YOU MUST. MAZUTSU WOULD HAVE ME KILLED IF I GAVE IN, REGARDLESS. MY LIFE ENDED A LONG TIME AGO.
LOTUS, THE FIRST JUG OF WATER, PLEASE. HOLD HER TIGHT.
F@*KING BITCHES! ALL OF YOU!
DON'T BE A CRYBABY, ROSE. IT REALLY KILLS YOUR MYSTIQUE. NOW...
...OPEN WIDE.
CAN'T... UNNH... GET HER MOUTH OPEN!
I GOT THIS--
--I SAID OPEN!
THUNK

GOOD GIRL!
GAAAAK!
LOTUS, THE WATER-- NOW!
ON THE WAY.
-GASP!-
HE IS NOT WORTH THIS, ROSE. TELL US WHAT WE NEED TO KNOW!
RRRGGGGGGHHH!
GGGHHHHHH!
KABOOOOM

WHO--?!
CRACK
UNGH!
WHO DID YOU SEND?!
THIS IS NOT ME...
ARE YOU OKAY?
I THINK SO.
GOOD, BECAUSE IT'S ABOUT TO GET WORSE. KEEP AN EYE ON OUR HOSTAGE!

WE SHOULD'VE BROUGHT HEAT.
WE DON'T EVEN KNOW WHAT WE'RE UP AGAINST.
STAY READY.
DIVE!
WHAT THE HELL IS GOING ON?
THUNK
AGGH!
CRACK
SMASH

WAIT! I THINK I SEE--
--SOMETHING!
AHHHHHHHH!
CRUNCH
ASTER!!!

YOU THINK YOU CAN AMBUSH ALL OF US?! THINK AGAIN!
ORCHID, NO!
ORCHID!
SHOW YOURSELF, COWARD!
SHHHHHHH...
...IRIS, I DON'T LIKE BEING YELLED AT, SO EITHER YOU CAN QUIET DOWN...

...OR I'LL SHUT YOU UP MYSELF.

WHO ARE YOU? WHAT DO YOU WANT?
I AM LIKE YOU, IRIS...
...AN EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT.
YOU THINK THAT SURPRISES ME? CLEARLY YOU'VE BEEN TRAINED WELL. BUT, WHY ARE YOU DOING THIS?!
IT'S HER I WANT. THE REST OF YOU I COULD CARE LESS ABOUT. YOU ALL ARE JUST IN MY WAY.
WHOEVER YOU ARE--
--YOU JUST MADE A HUGE MISTAKE. THE ONLY WAY YOU'RE GETTING TO HER IS THROUGH ME.
THE MISTAKE IS ALL YOURS.

TOO SLOW!
AHHH!
THUNK
CRACK
GIVE IT UP, IRIS. I KNOW WHO YOU ARE AND WHAT YOU HAVE GONE THROUGH. BUT ME, I AM IN MY PRIME.
THUD

NOW, IT IS YOUR TURN.
WAIT!
GET UP. YOU ARE COMING WITH ME.
YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU'RE DOING. ROSE IS NOT WHO YOU THINK SHE IS.
ON THE CONTRARY, I KNOW MORE ABOUT ALL OF YOU THEN YOU WILL EVER KNOW.
'TILL WE MEET AGAIN, IRIS.

TOKYO, JAPAN.
SIR, WE'VE TRIED TO REACH HER ON THE SECURE LINE AND THE AGREED-UPON MESSAGE BOARD--
--ROSE HAS GONE OFF THE GRID.
KEEP TRYING. THESE MISSIONS ARE NOT AN EXACT SCIENCE.
BUT SIR--
--DID I ASK FOR FEEDBACK?! YOU KEEP TRYING UNTIL YOU GET ME A TANGIBLE RESULT! WHETHER IT'S HER VOICE ON THE PHONE OR HER DEAD BODY IN THE MORGUE. I DON'T CARE...
...I JUST WANT RESULTS.

HEY, ARE YOU OKAY?
I'LL MANAGE. UNFORTUNATELY, I'VE REBUILT THIS HOME MORE TIMES THAN I LIKE TO COUNT.
STILL-- YOU DIDN'T ASK FOR ANY OF THIS.
DID ANY OF US?
IT'S OKAY, IRIS. THIS-- IS NOTHING. I HAVE PLENTY OF WEALTH TO REBUILD. I'M JUST GLAD THE TIGER WASN'T HURT BADLY.
THE REAL QUESTION IS, IF THAT STRANGER WANTED ROSE, AND DIDN'T KILL US ALL-- THEN WHO EXACTLY DOES SHE WORK FOR?
IS IT BROKEN?
I'M AFRAID SO.
OUCH.
IT PAINS, BUT NOT AS MUCH AS THAT BITCH IS GOING TO FEEL.
SO, WHAT'S THE PLAN LADIES? I TRUST YOU'LL FOLLOW US IN FINDING ROSE AND HER FRIEND?
I... I CAN'T, LILY.

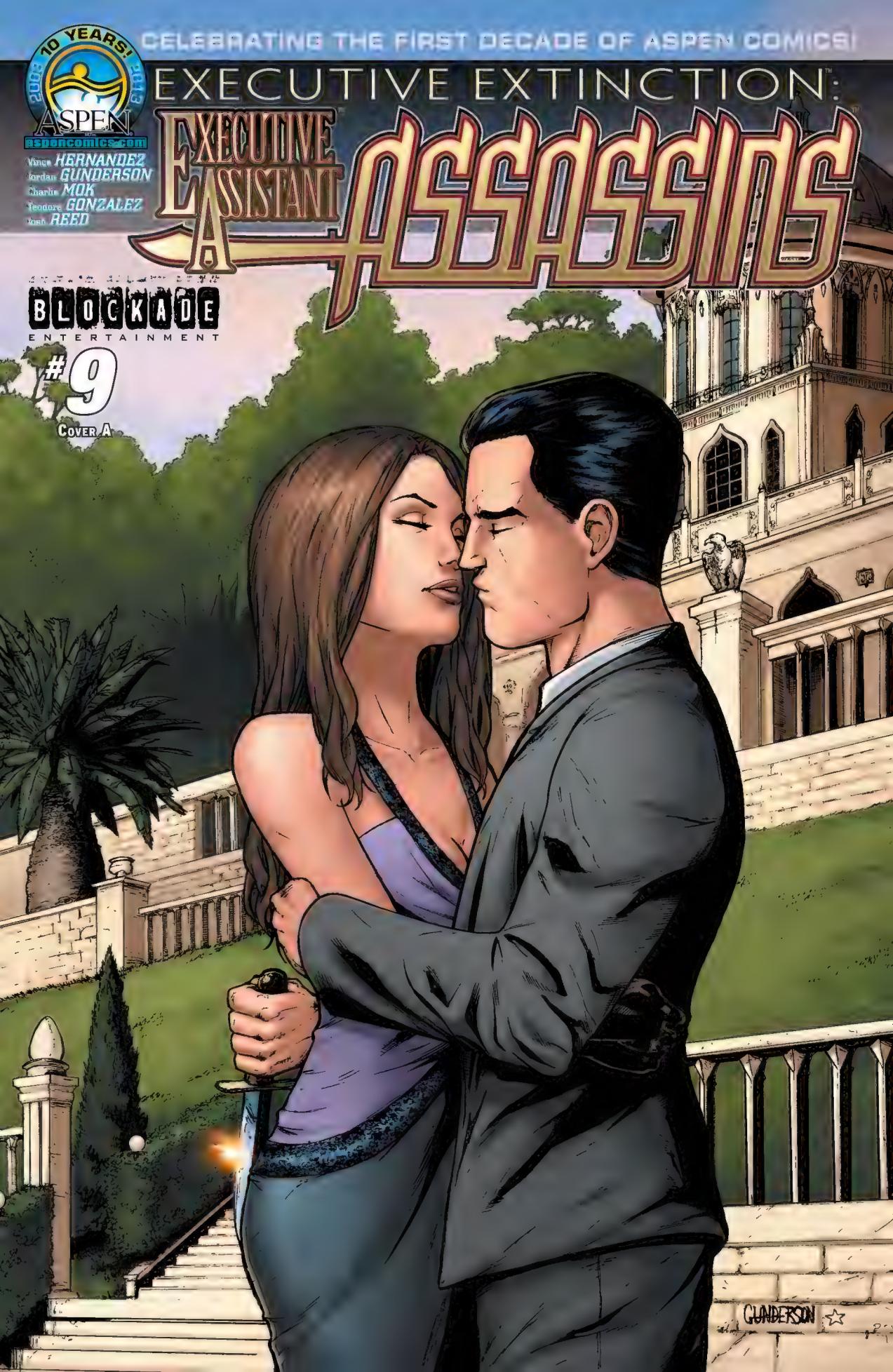
WHAT?
IN CASE YOU MISSED IT, WE JUST GOT OUR ASSES KICKED.
I UNDERSTAND THAT, LILY. BUT, I--
--YOU HAVE TO GO BACK TO YOUR AGENCY, IS THAT IT? JEEZ, IRIS. WHAT'S HAPPENED TO YOU? THIS USED TO BE A NO-BRAINER.
IT'S DIFFERENT NOW. THIS IS WHAT HAPPENS WHEN WE GO OFF AND DO OUR OWN THING-- DON'T YOU GET IT? I CAN'T KEEP DOING THIS, I'M... SORRY.
WHAT ABOUT YOU, LOTUS? WHAT WILL YOU DO?

THIS IS MY HOME. I CAN'T LEAVE.
BESIDES, I'M A BIG GIRL. IF MAZUTSU WANTS TO TRY TO TAKE ME OUT AGAIN-- LET HIM TRY HIS BEST.
WELL, THAT'S JUST AWESOME-- WE CAME ALL THIS WAY TO GET OUR COLLECTIVE ASSES HANDED TO US WITH NOTHING TO SHOW FOR IT.
LET'S GO, GIRLS.
I'M REALLY SORRY, LILY. TRULY.
IT'S FINE.
I GUESS OUR PATHS HAVE NEVER REALLY RUN PARALLEL, AM I RIGHT?
YEAH.
HEY--
--IF YOU DO FIND ROSE, MAKE SURE TO MAKE HER PAY-- FOR ME.
SURE THING, IRIS. TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF, OKAY?

New Delhi, India.
So, are you gonna tell me just who the hell you are and why you saved my ass back there?
Do not worry, I am not going to kill you if that is what you are thinking.
Clearly.
But, I'm still your prisoner?
It is precautionary.
You are an assassin, after all.
I wouldn't worry. Besides the fact you just saved my life, I usually need to know *WHO* it is that I'm going after.
You? I have *NO IDEA* who you are.
And what part of your work involves me, exactly?
My name is *IVY*.
I used to do what you do, but now... now I work freelance.

THE PART INVOLVING YOUR EMPLOYER.
GREAT. THIS AGAIN.
NO. IT IS NOT LIKE THAT. I KNOW MAZUTSU... PERSONALLY.
HE IS NOT WHAT YOU THINK. IF YOU CONTINUE WORKING FOR HIM, HE WILL EVENTUALLY TURN ON YOU. IT'S WHAT HE DOES.
I WORK ALONE. EVEN WHEN I'M WORKING FOR SOME BIG SHOT LIKE HIM-- I ALWAYS HAVE MY OWN INTERESTS IN MIND.
IT'S WHO I AM.
THEN I KNOW I RESCUED THE RIGHT PERSON.
IN THAT CASE, HOW ABOUT WE SHARE A MOMENT OF TRUST.
YOU LIVE HERE?
I WOULD NOT SAY THAT. I USE IT TO SLEEP EVERY NOW AND THEN. IT'S MORE OF A--
--WAIT... DO YOU HEAR THAT?
YEAH, IT'S COMING FROM OUTSIDE.
SHIT...

...TAKE COVER!!!
TO BE CONTINUED...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BLOCKADE ENTERTAINMENT
#9
COVER A
GUNDERSON

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#9
COVER B
MIYAO

The story so far...

The Executive Assistants converged at Lotus's mansion in order to find ways to reach Mazutsu. Ever instead encountered their former ally Bree, who now works for him. Unable to peaceably coerce her into revealing the whereabouts of her master, the girls were ambushed by an all new Executive Assistant: Ivy, and now even more questions remain unanswered.

EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT: ASSASSINS

EXECUTIVE EXTINCTION

PART 4 OF 5

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EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT: ASSASSINS™ Vol. 1 Issue 9

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[illegible] 1888•COMIC•BOOK [illegible] CHRISTINE MEYER [illegible]

ROSE!
TAKE COVER!!!
BOOOOOM
ROSE-- CAN YOU HEAR ME?!
UNNNNNGHHH...
HURRY! WE MUST GET INTO THE HALLWAY BEFORE THEY FIRE ANOTHER--
BOOM
HOLD ON!

PRECISION ATTACK. ONLY AIMED AT THIS APARTMENT. MAZUTSU WILL PAY FOR THIS!
HEY-- I DON'T KNOW WHO YOU THINK YOU ARE, BUT--
--I AM THE PERSON WHO JUST SAVED YOUR F@*KING LIFE-- TWICE. AND I AM TELLING YOU THAT MAZUTSU IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THAT ATTACK BACK THERE.
HOW DO YOU... UNGH... KNOW IT'S HIM?
APACHE STEALTH F@*KING HELICOPTERS, ROSE. WHO ELSE DO YOU KNOW HAS ACCESS TO THAT TYPE OF WEAPONRY?
OPEN YOUR EYES. YOU ARE WORKING FOR A SOCIOPATH!
LOOK, IT IS ME HE WANTS DEAD. AND HE MOST LIKELY DOES NOT EVEN KNOW YOU WERE WITH ME, SO...
...GO BACK TO HIM. BEFORE THE COPS GET HERE. PRETEND LIKE YOU KNOW NOTHING. IT JUST MAY SAVE YOUR LIFE. BUT, ROSE-- YOU CANNOT TRUST HIM.
DO NOT FORGET WHO SAVED YOUR LIFE THIS DAY-- AND WHAT WE ARE CAPABLE OF IF YOU CHOOSE TO STOP ISOLATING YOURSELF. HAVING POWERFUL ALLIES IS THE ONLY WAY TO SURVIVE IN THESE TIMES. YOUR FRIEND IRIS UNDERSTANDS THIS-- NOW YOU MUST DO THE SAME. COME FIND ME WHEN YOU ARE READY.

TOKYO, JAPAN.
WHAT IS THIS PLACE?
MY FORMER EMPLOYER SENT ME HERE ONCE TO BREAK UP AN ILLEGAL AVIATION RING MOONLIGHTING AS A DRUG EMPIRE. THE YAKUZA WERE SELLING STOLEN PASSENGER PLANE PARTS TO THE HIGHEST BIDDER ON THE SIDE. GOOD MONEY IN IT. YOU TWO SHOULD LOOK INTO IT IF YOU EVER NEED QUICK CASH.
ONE CRIME AT A TIME, ORCHID.
THIS SHOULD DO JUST FINE.
I MISS MY TOWNHOUSE IN LONDON, ALREADY.
SERIOUSLY, LILY, WHAT ARE OUR ODDS OF GETTING TO MAZUTSU? EVEN IF WE SET UP IN THE SAME CITY, HOW WILL WE EVER GET CLOSE TO HIM? I'M ASSUMING HE'S PAID FOR SEVERAL LAYERS OF PRIVATIZED SECURITY?
NO...
...HE *OWNS* HIS OWN SECURITY FIRM.
NO LADIES, THIS IS GONNA REQUIRE A LOT MORE FINESSE-- AND MAYBE A MIRACLE.

YOU ARE DEAD TO ME...
...OR AT LEAST YOU WERE. DO I NEED TO OFFER YOU A LESSON IN COMMUNICATION?
IT'S YOU WHO SHOULD BE OFFERING THE EXPLANATION.
COME AGAIN?
I WAS NEARLY KILLED. BLOWN APART BY YOUR ATTACK. YOU WANT TO TELL ME YOU HAD NOTHING TO DO WITH THAT?
...
WHAT...?
DON'T ACT SURPRISED. I KNOW YOU ORDERED THE ATTACK ON IVY'S APARTMENT. IT HAS YOUR NAME WRITTEN ALL OVER IT. ONLY I WAS THERE, TOO!
THE BITCH SAVED MY LIFE AND THEN YOU ALMOST TOOK IT!
IVY... SHE WHAT?
I TOLD YOU, SHE--

SLAP
DO NOT FORGET IT IS ONLY YOU AND I IN HERE--
YOU WILL CEASE WITH THE MEANINGLESS THREATS!
I AM NOT SOME BACK ALLEY THUG YOU CAN TAKE OUT WITH EASE-- I AM FAR WORSE!
IT'S THE PROBLEM WITH YOU EXECUTIVE ASSISTANTS. YOU LACK RESPECT. RESPECT FOR AUTHORITY. RESPECT FOR POWER!
IVY WAS THE SAME...
WHO... IS SHE...?

ISRAEL. TEN YEARS EARLIER.
"IT IS NOT WHO SHE IS, BUT WHAT SHE WAS.
"I WAS YOUNGER THEN, MORE FOOLISH TO THE REALITIES OF THE WORLD...
"...YET NO LESS POWERFUL.
"THE ISRAELI DEFENSE FORCE WAS ONE OF MY BEST CUSTOMERS, ALTHOUGH OUR TRANSACTIONS WERE ALWAYS COVERT.
"FOR GOVERNMENTS, IT IS MORE PRUDENT TO KEEP THE PURCHASES OF YOUR ARSENAL SECRET...
"...LEST THEIR CITIZENS FIND OUT THE TRUE ORIGIN OF THEIR FREEDOM AND PROTECTION.
"HOWEVER, IT WAS NOT THE ONLY SECRET THEY WERE KEEPING.
"I KNEW WHAT SHE WAS RIGHT AWAY."

"AND WITH MY CONSIDERABLE RESOURCES, IT WAS NOT HARD TO PERSUADE THE ISRAELI LIEUTENANT TO OUTSOURCE HIS INVESTMENT."
YOU REQUESTED TO SEE ME?
YES. THANK YOU FOR JOINING ME. THEY TELL ME YOUR NAME IS IVY.
AND WHO WOULD "THEY" BE?
ALL OF THEM. YOUR PEOPLE. THEY ARE EASILY SWAYED BY THE PERSUASION OF MONEY.
I KNOW WHAT YOU ARE. I KNEW FROM THE SECOND I SAW YOU.
YOU ARE AN EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT. AN ASSASSIN OF THE FINEST CALIBER.
AND THIS... TURNS YOU ON?
DO YOU WANT THE TRUTH?
OF COURSE.
NO...
...
SO... WHAT IS IT YOU WANT FROM ME?
NO... WHAT DO YOU WANT FROM ME?

"WE BONDED QUICKLY. CALL IT PERFECT TIMING PERHAPS, OR MAYBE IT WAS FATE...
UP AHEAD. ONE HOUR.
"...EITHER WAY, OUR INTERESTS ALIGNED...
"...OUR LOVE WAS... PASSIONATE. I ADMIT I LET MY GUARD DOWN. I LET HER IN."

"I SHOWED HER THE INNER DETAILS OF MY LIFE'S WORK.
"AND WHAT OUR FUTURE HELD.
"HOWEVER, CERTAIN ASPECTS OF MY LIFE I SHOULD HAVE KEPT SHROUDED. THINGS I SHOULD HAVE KNOWN SHE WOULD NOT BE READY FOR.
"WE WERE ON THE CUSP ON TELEPATHIC CONTROL-- OF SOMETHING SPECIAL. WORLD-CHANGING.
"BUT, SHE WAS NOT READY."

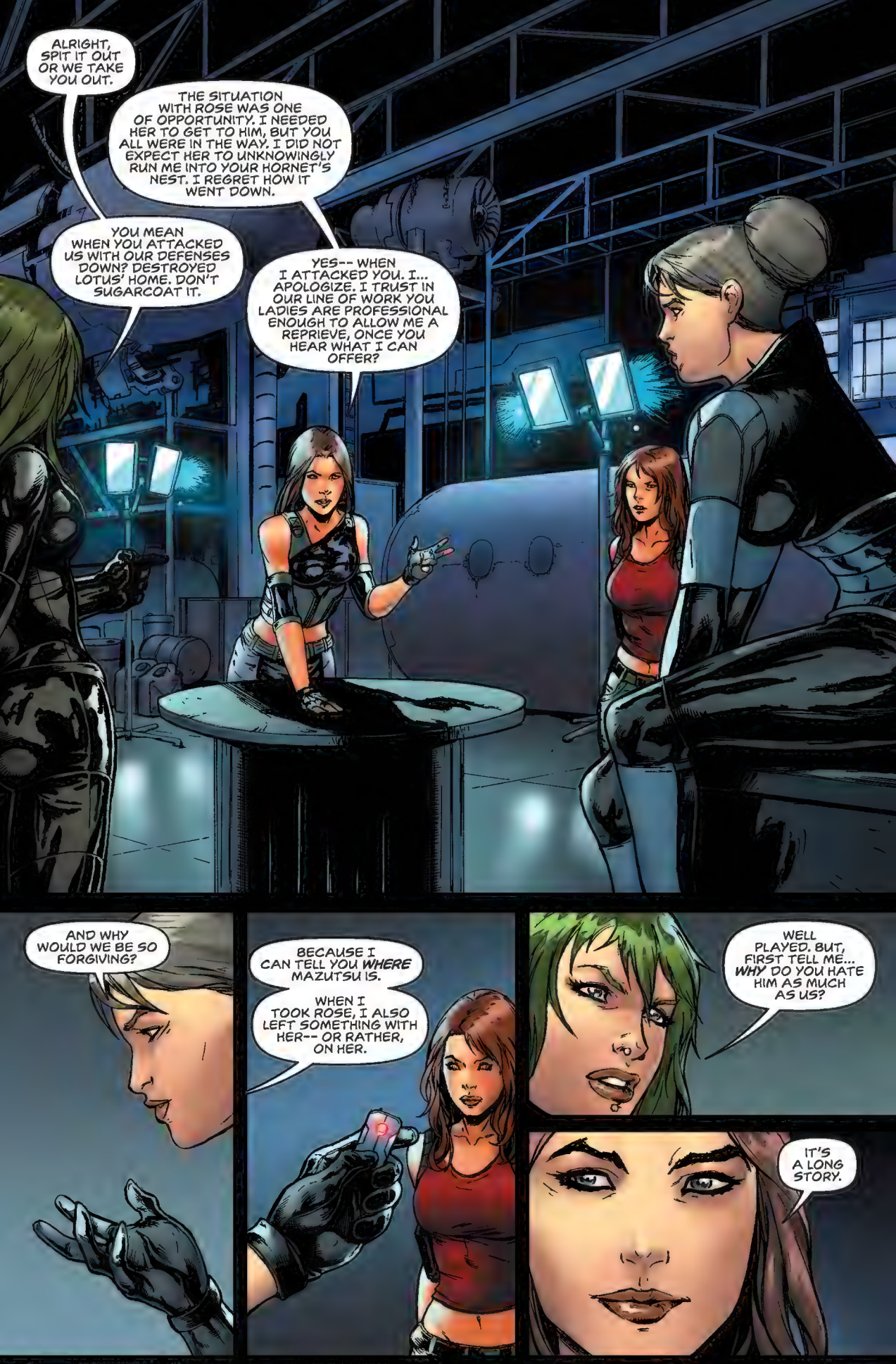
"AND, LIKE EVERYONE, TRUE NEEDS ALWAYS RISE TO THE SURFACE. WEALTH AND POWER WAS MY DRAW FOR HER, I ALWAYS KNEW THIS. YET THERE WERE OTHERS WHO FOUND THIS WEAKNESS IN HER, AS WELL....
"...AND EXPLOITED IT.
"MY COMPETITORS USED HER WEAKNESS FOR WEALTH TO THEIR ADVANTAGE. THEY SOUGHT TO STEAL MY LIVELIHOOD. WHAT WE SACRIFICED TO CREATE.
05
"I WAS SHATTERED."
TRACKING

"WHEN CONFRONTED, SHE DID NOT DENY IT.
YOU KNEW WHAT I WAS WHEN YOU MET ME. I HAVE NOT CHANGED, IT IS *YOU* WHO HAS LOST HIS WAY!
"I SAW RED.
"YET, I WAS NO FIGHTER BY NATURE.
CRACK
"SHE KNEW AS MUCH. SHE LEFT ME THERE... IN PIECES."

"I made a vow to myself that day— that she would be the last person to ever see me in such a light.
"I conditioned myself to improve my physical form. I hired the most lethal of trainers money could buy to guide me.
"Teach me how to survive.
"They taught me not only how to protect myself, but also how to *believe* in myself.
"In return, I taught them of the harsh realities of our world. Of what my private life must entail.
"I was ready for anything... or anyone."

EVER SINCE, SHE HAS BECOME MY OBSESSION. ONLY NOW I DO NOT SEEK HER LOVE-- BUT HER BLOOD. YET, SHE HAS REMAINED OUT OF REACH.
IS *THAT* WHY YOU'RE DOING ALL THIS? REVENGE?
IT'S MORE COMPLICATED THAN THAT.
DOESN'T SEEM THAT WAY.
WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT LOVE?! *WHO* HAVE YOU EVER FELT FOR BESIDES YOURSELF?!
ALRIGHT, ALRIGHT. TAKE IT EASY.
I'VE NEVER BEEN IN LOVE, OKAY. IT DOESN'T MEAN I DON'T KNOW WHAT IT FEELS LIKE TO BE BETRAYED.
YOU EXECUTIVE ASSISTANTS, SO KNOWLEDGEABLE IN THE REALITIES OF THE WORLD, YET SO SHELTERED FROM ITS MOST CARNAL EMOTIONS.
I WANT TO RID MY BUSINESS OF THE NUISANCE OF YOUR KIND. YET, HER-- I WANT TO SEE HER FEEL PAIN.

THE NEXT DAY.
FACE IT... WE DON'T HAVE A CLUE HOW TO FIND HIM, DO WE?
I HAVE A FEW IDEAS BUT THAT'S ALL THEY ARE.
GREAT, I'M GLAD WE FLEW ALL THIS WAY WITHOUT A PLAN.
IT'S NEVER STOPPED ME BEFORE. YOU NEED TO LEARN TO IMPROVISE.
NO, I NEED TO FIND OUT WHY MY MIND IS STILL F@*KED. THEN I CAN WORRY ABOUT IMPROV.
--IS WORK ON YOUR OPERATIONAL SECURITY.
ONE MORE STEP AND YOU'RE A F@*KING DEAD WOMAN! HOW DID YOU GET IN HERE, IT'S LOCKED DOWN LIKE A F@*KING VAULT!?
LADIES, WE NEED TO FOCUS ON--
--WHAT YOU NEED TO DO...
RELAX, HOT HEAD. I DIDN'T COME LOOKING FOR ACTION. I CAME TO OFFER SOME ASSISTANCE. AND FROM THE LOOKS OF THINGS, I CAME AT THE RIGHT TIME.
AND WHY SHOULD WE TRUST YOU, CONSIDERING THE FIRST TIME WE MET YOU WEREN'T SO PLEASANT?
BITCH, YOU BROKE MY HAND!
BECAUSE... NOBODY WANTS MAZUTSU DEAD MORE THAN ME.


ALRIGHT, SPIT IT OUT OR WE TAKE YOU OUT.
THE SITUATION WITH ROSE WAS ONE OF OPPORTUNITY. I NEEDED HER TO GET TO HIM, BUT YOU ALL WERE IN THE WAY. I DID NOT EXPECT HER TO UNKNOWINGLY RUN ME INTO YOUR HORNET'S NEST. I REGRET HOW IT WENT DOWN.
YOU MEAN WHEN YOU ATTACKED US WITH OUR DEFENSES DOWN? DESTROYED LOTUS' HOME. DON'T SUGARCOAT IT.
YES-- WHEN I ATTACKED YOU. I... APOLOGIZE. I TRUST IN OUR LINE OF WORK YOU LADIES ARE PROFESSIONAL ENOUGH TO ALLOW ME A REPRIEVE, ONCE YOU HEAR WHAT I CAN OFFER?
AND WHY WOULD WE BE SO FORGIVING?
BECAUSE I CAN TELL YOU *WHERE* MAZUTSU IS.
WHEN I TOOK ROSE, I ALSO LEFT SOMETHING WITH HER-- OR RATHER, ON HER.
WELL PLAYED. BUT, FIRST TELL ME... *WHY* DO YOU HATE HIM AS MUCH AS US?
IT'S A LONG STORY.

HE LIKES TO FANCY HIMSELF A HISTORIAN, AS IF HIS INHERENT KNOWLEDGE OF THE ANCIENT CUSTOMS MAKES HIS MISDEEDS ANY LESS HONORABLE.
SO THEY HAVE TAKEN UP RESIDENCE IN A BUDDHIST TEMPLE, ONE OF THE LAST REMAINING IN SHINJUKU.
YET, THE LEVEL OF PROTECTION I DARE SAY IS ABOVE OUR COMBINED LEVEL OF EXPERTISE. IT'S JUST A REALITY.
NEVER STOPPED ME BEFORE.
NO, LILY. THIS IS DIFFERENT. THIS IS HIS LIVELIHOOD-- WHAT DRIVES HIM. HE WANTS YOU TO COME TO HIM.
WELL, I WOULDN'T WANT TO LET HIM DOWN.
YOU ARE SUICIDAL.
YES, DEARS. I'M ALL FOR VENGEANCE, YET THIS SEEMS FOOLISH.
SHE'S RIGHT LILY. THIS IS OVER NOW.

I'M SORRY-- I DIDN'T WANT IT TO END LIKE THIS. BUT... HE'S THE ONLY ONE WHO CAN HELP ME RIGHT MY MIND. HE'S THE ONLY ONE WITH ANSWERS.
YOU KNOW WHAT I'M SAYING, LILY. IT'S HAPPENED TO YOU BEFORE. WE ALL KNOW TRUST IS A LUXURY WE CAN'T AFFORD.
ORCHID... WHAT ARE YOU...?
WELL, THIS I DID NOT EXPECT.
SHE'S RIGHT. I SHOULD'VE KNOWN BETTER THAN TO TRUST HER. SHE CAME TO ME.
ORCHID, YOU DON'T HAVE TO DO THIS. WE'LL FIND A WAY--
--SAVE IT. HE OFFERED ME A WAY OUT. I TOOK IT. IF YOU'VE LIVED INSIDE MY MIND AS I HAVE LATELY, YOU'D UNDERSTAND. I NEED THIS.
THEN SHUT YOUR F@*KING TRAP AND GET IT OVER WITH!
CLICK
CHING

AHHHHHHH!
BANG
LILY!
KLANK
KLANK
NOT THIS SHIT AGAIN!
UNNNGHHH!
IT'S NOT SO FUN TO BE TAKEN BY SURPRISE, IS IT?!
NOW, TELL ME WHY I SHOULDN'T JUST KILL YOU HERE AND NOW?!
BECAUSE... >CHOKE<
WHOMP WHOMP WHOMP
UM, LADIES, DO YOU HEAR THAT?
...BECAUSE...

"...MAZUTSU IS HERE."

TO BE CONTINUED...

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#10
COVER A
GUNDERSON
Sotelo

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#10
COVER B

The story so far...

Mazursus ex-lover Ivy and Rose, his Executive Assistant, were forced to part ways under the threat of a helicopter attack. Yet, not before Ivy left a tracking device on Rose in order to [illegible] the sinister mastermind. Meanwhile, [illegible] were able to track down Lily, Orchid and Lotus to their warehouse safe house and explain her [illegible] current events. However, Orchid's [illegible] motives proved to be far removed from her allies, as she betrayed the group by giving away their location to Mazursus, who has arrived to exterminate all of them once and for all.

EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT: ASSASSINS

EXECUTIVE EXTINCTION

PART 5 OF 5

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I'M SHOT-- NOT CRITICAL, BUT-- F@#K. THIS IS ABOUT TO GET REAL UGLY, FAST!
WHAT DID YOU DO?!
WHAT ANY OF YOU WOULD HAVE! MY MIND IS F@#KED! DON'T YOU GET IT? I NEED HIM!
WELL, THAT'S ONE THREAT NEUTRALIZED. YET, OUR ODDS OF SURVIVAL STILL GROW LESSER BY THE MINUTE.
YOU ARE WRONG. HE WILL USE YOU AND LEAVE YOU WORSE THAN HE FOUND YOU-- AND FOR WHAT?
ONLY YOUR SOUL!
KRAAACK
THUD

THE SOLDIERS WON'T LAST AGAINST THEM. THEY ARE ONLY STAGE ONE. ROSE, BRING ME LILY.
ON IT.
CARGO BIRD IS AWAY. TROOPS IN POSITION.
ON HIS MARK...
...MOVE, MOVE, MOVE!
THWUMP
THWUMP
THWUMP
KRAAAAASH
GAS!!!
CLINK
CLINK
CLINK

FIND SOMETHING! COVER YOURSELVES!
I'M SURE YOU'RE USED TO THIS, TRAITOR.
RIIIIP
NOW, READY YOURSELVES FOR THEIR ASSAULT!
ASTER!
CAN'T... FIND ANYTHING... TO...
IVY-- HELP ME MOVE HER!
WE DON'T HAVE MUCH TIME BEFORE THEY--
KRAAAAASH

BRAKA
BRAKA
BRAKA
BRAKA
BRAKA
BRAKA
BRAKA
BRAKA
WE HAVE TO MAKE A MOVE. WE'RE TRAPPED HERE.
GOT IT.
I WILL DISTRACT THEM, AND YOU NEED TO SECURE THE HIGHER GROUND-- UP THERE!
BRAKA
BRAKA
BRAKA
BRAKA
BRAKA
BRAKA
BRAKA
GETTING FAR TOO USED TO THIS!
BRAKA

THINK FAST!
THIS SHOULD EVEN THE ODDS.
SHIIIING
KRACK
THE TARGET, 12 O'CLOCK!
BRAKA
BRAKA
BRAKA
BRAKA
BRAKA
BRAKA

DOWN ON THE GROUND, NOW!
ALL RIGHT, YOU HAVE ME.
BRAKA BRAKA BRAKA BRAKA BRAKA
IVY! MOVE!
BRAKA BRAKA
I THINK THAT'S MOST OF THEM! WE NEED TO GET ASTER AND LEAVE!
BRAKA BRAKA
CHING
AHHHHHHHH!
CHING

DOES THE GAS BOTHER YOU, AMATEUR?
I PROMISE I'LL MAKE IT FAST.
ROSE! SHE F@#KING SAVED YOUR LIFE!
I DIDN'T ASK HER TO, LILY!
DON'T GET ANY IDEAS. I'LL SNAP HER NECK EASY.
-->GAK<-- SHOOT... HER!
I CAN'T GET A CLEAN SHOT!
DROP YOUR WEAPON-- NOW!
...
F@#K.
GOOD GIRL.

THUNK
KRACK
IVY!
NOW, IT'S YOUR TURN. NO WEAPONS JUST MY BARE HANDS. AND LONG OVERDUE IF YOU ASK ME!
I COULDN'T AGREE MORE.
YOU'VE HAD THIS COMING FOR A LONG TIME!

KRAK

WELL, THAT STUNG.

UNGHH!

NOT QUITE.

KRAK

THUNK

RIIIIP

YOU--

--ARE WEAK!

SMAASHHH

YOU CAN'T BEAT ME!
YOU WILL ALWAYS BE LESSER THAN ME! THAN ALL OF US!
NNNNGGGHHHH!
ASTER-- COME ON, WE NEED TO HELP LILY! CAN YOU STAND?
ALL YOU DO--
--IS TALK!
WHUKKKKK
THAT'S ALL YOU'VE EVER DONE! TALK YOUR WAY OUT OF EVERY-THING! NEVER TAKING ACCOUNTABILITY FOR YOUR ACTIONS.
ONE DAY YOU'LL DISCOVER IT'S YOU-- NOT EVERYONE ELSE THAT IS F@#KED UP!
AT LEAST... AT LEAST I'M NOT AFRAID TO DO SOMETHING WITH MY--
BANG
...

LILY!
I TOLD YOU I WOULD GET THE LAST WORD.
I ALWAYS DO.
BANG

NO...
TELL ME I'M STILL ALIVE.
YOU ARE-- BUT, LILY...
...SHE--
--WE ONLY HAVE ONE SHOT AT THIS-- WE'LL NEED TO MOVE QUICK. ON THE COUNT OF THREE FOLLOW ME.
I WANTED HER DEAD, BUT BY MY OWN HANDS. NOT LIKE THIS. YOU SHOT HER IN THE BACK. WHERE'S THE HONOR IN THAT?
WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT HONOR, ROSE?
SHIT!

FIND COVER!
NOW'S OUR CHANCE-- LET'S MOVE!
UP THERE!
MAZUTSU, SIR, LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT IS CLOSING IN FAST, WE SHOULD REALLY GET MO--
--YOU'RE THE ONLY ONE GOING ANYWHERE, DEAR.
AHHHHHHH!

EPILOGUE.
"SHE DESERVED BETTER.
"TO DIE AT THE HANDS OF SOMEONE WITH NO HONOR LIKE THAT-- IT IS TRULY A SHAME."
"WHAT DO YOU THINK WILL HAPPEN TO HIM?"
"HE WILL TALK HIS WAY OUT OF THE MESS, AS ALL WEALTHY MEN OF POWER HAVE A KNACK FOR DOING.
"ALTHOUGH, HE WILL BE FORCED TO TAKE HIS OPERATIONS EVEN FURTHER UNDER-GROUND, LESS HE ADD ANY MORE CAUSE FOR SUSPICION.
"BUT, HE WAS NEVER ONE TO GET HIS HANDS DIRTY. HE WILL RETURN TO RELYING ON OTHERS TO DO THAT FOR HIM.
"THERE WILL ALWAYS BE THOSE WILLING TO OBLIGE HIM."
"OTHERS... WON'T BE AS LUCKY.
3

CHINATOWN, NEW YORK CITY.
GIFT SHOP
"WHAT'S OUR NEXT MOVE?"
"THE SAME AS IT WAS BEFORE."
WE FIND MAZUTSU-- AND WE KILL HIM, FOR LILY.
HERE, HERE.
EXIT
THIS GUY, HE HAS TO GO. TOO MANY PEOPLE HAVE DIED IN THE WAKE OF HIS ACTIONS. TOO MANY GOOD PEOPLE.
BUT, WE NEED TO BE SMARTER THIS TIME-- WE CAN'T DO THIS ALONE.
WHO SAID YOU HAVE TO?

LILY WAS MY FRIEND, AS WELL.
IRIS.
I TOLD YOU WE WOULD HAVE OUR REUNION.
WELL, I HAVEN'T FORGOTTEN ABOUT THE BEATING I TOOK-- IF THAT'S WHAT YOU THINK.
BUT, I'M ALSO A BIG GIRL. I KNOW HOW THIS GAME WORKS.
WE BOTH DO.
SORRY, LOTUS.
AND SO DO ALL OF YOU. BUT, THIS IS DIFFERENT. THIS IS PERSONAL. LILY WAS A PART OF US, FOR BETTER OR WORSE, WE ALL OWE IT TO HER TO SEE THIS THROUGH TO THE END.
NOW...

...TO LILY, A FLOWER WHO NEVER WAS ABLE TO BLOOM. MAY SHE FIND PEACE NOW...
KLINK
...AND, DON'T WORRY, I WILL FIND ROSE...
...AND DEAL WITH HER MYSELF.
END.

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10 YEARS!
ASPEN
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EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT
ASSASSINS
BLOCKADE
ENTERTAINMENT
#11
COVER A

CELEBRATING THE FIRST DECADE OF ASPEN COMICS!

ASPEN

EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT ASSASSINS

Vince HERNANDEZ
Giuseppe CAFARO
Mark ROSLAN
Teodoro GONZALEZ
Josh REED

BLOCKADE ENTERTAINMENT

#11

COVER B

The story so far...

Executive Assistant Lotus has not used her flower moniker since the betrayal by her one and only employer--Virat Yadav. However, her career move did not stop trouble from finding her, as Rani's lavish masquerade erupted into the staging ground for a destructive battle between rivaling Executive Assistants. Later, she would painfully discover that her past ally Lily had also been murdered, continuing the trail of bloodshed and tragedy that has shadowed her existence.

EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT: ASSASSINS

BLOODLINE

PART 1 OF 1

WRITTEN BY
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ALWAR, INDIA.
THIS IS MY HOME. MUCH LIKE MY EXISTENCE, THEY BOTH SHARE A PARALLEL. IT STANDS BEFORE ME WRECKED AND DAMAGED.
YET, THIS IS NOT ONLY MY HOME, BUT THE LAND MY ANCESTORS INHABITED FOR MORE THAN A CENTURY.
A BLOODLINE THAT TRULY LIVES UP TO ITS NAME.
DEATH IS OUR LIFE.

TWO DECADES EARLIER.
WHEN YOU ARE A CHILD, YOU DO NOT YEARN TO GROW UP TO BECOME A MURDERER.
MOST CHILDREN IN MY VILLAGE HAD DREAMS OF BECOMING DOCTORS, SCIENTISTS, OR EVEN LAWYERS...
...TO MAKE THEIR PARENTS PROUD. FOR ME, HOWEVER...
...MY FATHER'S PRIORITIES WERE LESS... CIVIL.
HRAAAA!
YOU PROVIDE ADEQUATE PRACTICE, RAKISH. YET, YOUR FEAR IS WRITTEN BRIGHT AS DAY WITH YOUR BODY LANGUAGE.
YES, FATHER. I WILL REFINE MY FORM.
HE WAS KNOWN SIMPLY AS "THE FATHER", EVEN TO HIS ASSOCIATES-- NOT JUST TO ME, HIS ONLY DAUGHTER. MY MOTHER HAD ABANDONED US WHEN I WAS A LITTLE GIRL. IT WAS ONLY US TWO.
RANI-- YOUR CLOTHES...? WHAT IS IT?
IT IS NOTHING, FATHER.
DO NOT LIE TO ME, YOUNG LADY.
I AM NOT LYING... IT IS JUST... SOME GIRLS IN MY CLASS... THEY... SMASHED THE TRANSMITTER I BUILT.
THEY MAKE FUN OF ME. PUSH ME. CALL ME "MICRO-CHIP". LIKE I SAID-- IT IS NOTHING.
LIFT YOUR HEAD, YOUNG LADY. YOU HAVE NOTHING TO BE ASHAMED OF.
COME WITH ME, RANI. I BELIEVE IT IS TIME I SHOWED YOU SOMETHING.

YOUR LOVE OF SCIENCE AND GADGETS IS ADMIRABLE, YET I FEAR YOU HAVE *MUCH* TO LEARN WHEN IT COMES TO THE TOOLS OF SURVIVAL-- AND WHO YOU ARE.
DO YOU *KNOW* WHAT BUSINESS OUR FAMILY IS IN? WHAT OUR BLOODLINE HAS CREATED FOR US?
YOU... HURT PEOPLE?
THAT IS INCORRECT. WHAT I DO IS FREE PEOPLE. FROM THEIR OWN PAIN.
THE LIFE THEY HAVE CHOSEN HAS LED THEM ASTRAY, DOWN AVENUES THEY CANNOT RETURN FROM. MY ACTIONS, WHILE PERMANENT, RELEASE THEM FROM THEIR IMPRISONMENT-- FOREVER.
AND NOW I WILL TEACH YOU OF THE POWER OUR LINEAGE HAS PROVIDED US.

HE TAUGHT ME EVERY MARTIAL ART HE HAD LEARNED IN HIS MANY YEARS OF WORK, WHICH WAS NEARLY ALL OF THEM.
MY FATHER WAS STERN, YET COMPASSIONATE.
YOUR ENEMIES WILL SEEK TO KEEP YOU OFF-BALANCE, AS SUCH.
YOU MUST LEARN TO MAINTAIN POISE NO MATTER THE SITUATION.
YOU MUST BE ABLE TO PIECE TOGETHER NOT ONLY THE SITUATION, BUT ALSO THE ELEMENTS WITHIN.
WAIT.
I LEARNED TO NOT FEAR THE DARK...
...BUT TO EMBRACE IT...
GRRRR
...AND BECOME A PREDATOR.

NOT YET, RAN!! WAIT FOR IT...
PATIENCE IS THE KEY. IT'S WHAT SEPARATES A CONTRACTOR FROM SOMEONE WHO KILLS OUT OF PASSION...
...WE WAIT...
...UNTIL OPPORTUNITY STRIKES.
IF YOU COULD ONLY KNOW THE PRIDE I HAVE FOR YOU AT THIS MOMENT.
YES, OUR KIND IS RARE, INDEED.

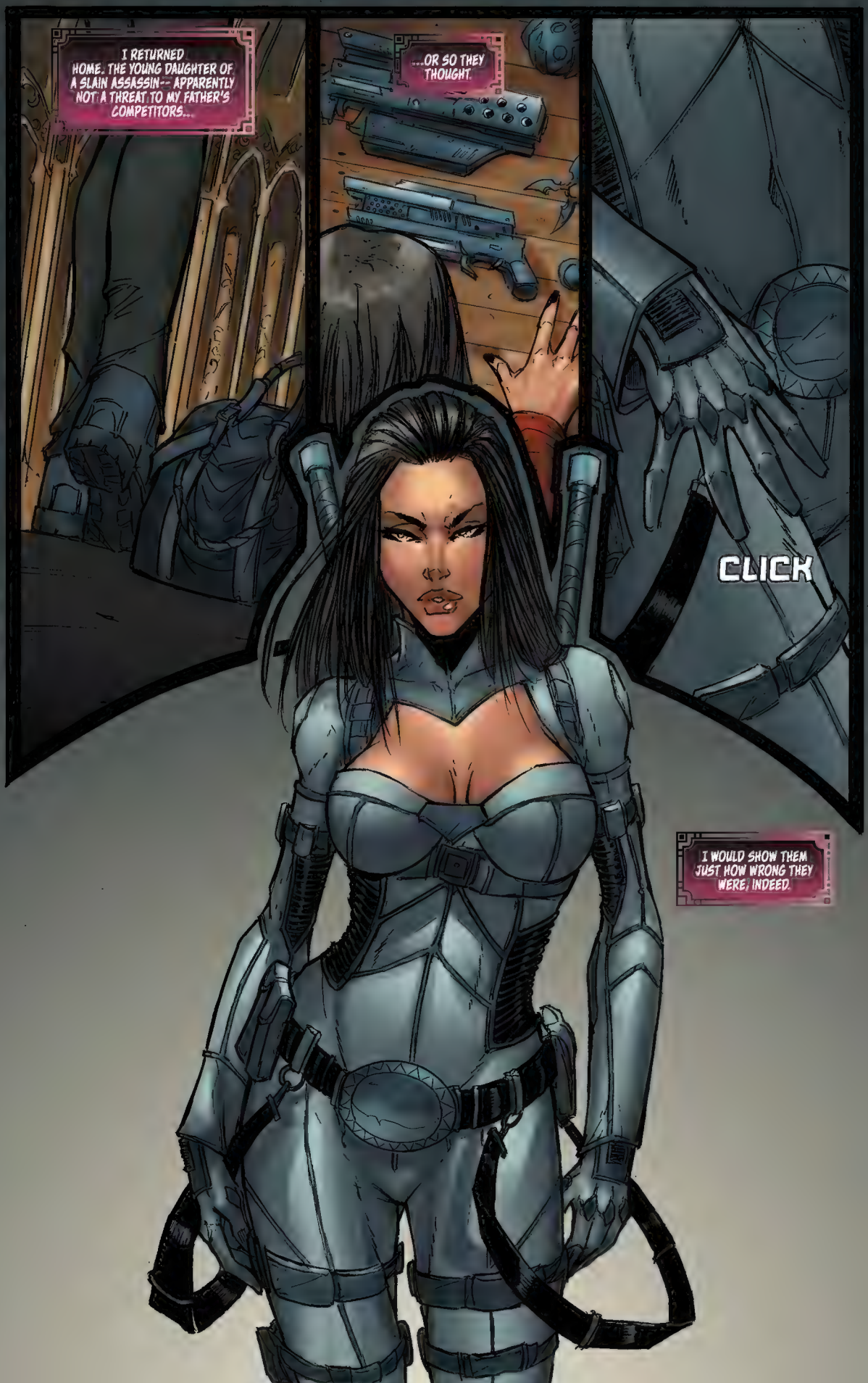
FATHER THOUGHT THAT MY OBSESSION WITH TECHNOLOGY WOULD BE A WASTE OF TIME, BUT I WAS DETERMINED TO SHOW HIM THE POSSIBILITIES IT POSSESSED.
I ALREADY KNEW AT THE AGE OF TEN THAT I WAS SMARTER THAN MOST OF MY PEERS-- MAYBE EVEN MANY ADULTS. BUT, I NEVER CARED WHAT THEY THOUGHT ANYWAY.
ONLY HIS APPROVAL MATTERED.
FATHER, LOOK!
ANOTHER GADGET, RANI? HAVEN'T I TOLD YOU BEFORE--
--WATCH!
WHAT A CURIOUS DEVICE--
-:COUGH:- WHAT...? -:COUGH:-
SEE, FATHER, MY GADGETS CAN BE USEFUL! THIS WAS A LOW-GRADE CONCENTRATE OF BUG SPRAY AND FERTILIZER. TRIGGERED BY A CONTACT SENSOR.
THUD
HMM.
YES, HIS APPROVAL MEANT EVERYTHING TO ME.

HOWEVER, THOSE DAYS OF MY YOUTH-- DAYS I CHERISHED-- SOON TURNED INTO ADULTHOOD. THIS IS WHEN EVERYTHING CHANGED.
YOU REMIND ME WITH EACH PASSING DAY OF YOUR MOTHER. SHE TOO WAS BEAUTIFUL BEYOND WORDS.
SHE WAS A GLORIOUS WOMAN, YOUR MOTHER.
HOWEVER, I WAS FOOLISH THEN. I SOUGHT TO CHANGE HER IN WAYS THAT I THOUGHT WOULD MAKE US BOTH HAPPY. HOW WRONG I WAS.
YOU SEE, RANI. THIS LIFESTYLE... IT CHANGES NOT ONLY WHO WE ARE, BUT OUR LOVED ONES AS WELL.
FATHER... WHY ARE YOU TELLING ME THIS?
BECAUSE I WANT TO GIVE YOU SOMETHING.
HAPPY BIRTHDAY.
THANK YOU, FATHER.
YOU DIDN'T HAVE TO--
--YES, I DID. OPEN IT.
IT'S BEAUTIFUL
THIS NECKLACE...
...RANI, THIS BELONGED TO YOUR MOTHER. I GAVE IT TO HER, BUT SHE LEFT IT UPON HER DEPARTURE. WHEN SHE LEFT BOTH OF US. NOW... I WANT YOU TO HAVE IT.
YOU WILL WEAR IT PROUDLY, WON'T YOU?
ALWAYS, FATHER.

BUT, LIKE ALL THINGS IN MY LIFE-- PEACE WAS NEVER CONSTANT.
RANI-- WAKE UP! COME, WE MUST LEAVE, NOW.
WHAT IS IT, FATHER?
I DO NOT HAVE MUCH TIME TO EXPLAIN, BUT I WILL NOT SHIELD YOU FROM THE REALITIES OF OUR SITUATION.
MY COMPETITION SEEKS TO END MY BUSINESS, AND BY DOING SO-- MY LIFE. THIS PERSON... HAS MANY RESOURCES AT THEIR DISPOSAL. WE CANNOT STAY HERE, IT IS TOO DANGEROUS FOR YOU.
FATHER?
PLEASE, WE MUST GO NOW, RANI.
IT WAS THE FIRST TIME THE RULES OF HIS OCCUPATION BECAME PAINFULLY OBVIOUS TO ME. THE NIGHT WE LEFT OUR HOME.

WE TRAVELED TO A SAFE HOUSE. I WILL NOT LIE, MY HEART SUNK AT THE SQUALOR EXISTENCE IT PROVIDED. I WAS, AFTER ALL, A GIRL OF MEANS UP UNTIL THAT POINT.
LOTUS
YET, I WILL ALWAYS REMEMBER IT AS THE MOST CHERISHED TIME OF MY LIFE, WITH ONLY EACH OTHER TO DEPEND ON. I WAS ALWAYS THE CENTER OF HIS ATTENTION.
IT IS WHISKEY-- HERE, GIVE IT A TRY.
REALLY.
REALLY? I CAN?
-PFFFFF!- GROSS!
HAHAHAHA!
I WAS ALWAYS SAFE WITH HIM...
...UNTIL ONE NIGHT I WASN'T.
AAAAAHHHHHHHHHHHHH!!!
FATHER!?

I WILL NEVER FORGET AWAKENING TO THE SOUND OF HIS AGONY...
FATHER!
-GASP!-
...OR WHAT I SAW BEFORE ME.
NO...
SOMEONE HAD REACHED US.
EVERYTHING CHANGED AT THAT MOMENT.
FROM THAT POINT ON, MY LIFE HELD A DIFFERENT PURPOSE.


I RETURNED HOME. THE YOUNG DAUGHTER OF A SLAIN ASSASSIN-- APPARENTLY NOT A THREAT TO MY FATHER'S COMPETITORS...
...OR SO THEY THOUGHT.
CLICK
I WOULD SHOW THEM JUST HOW WRONG THEY WERE, INDEED.

HIS NAME IS THE TIGER! HE IS A PRIVATE CONTRACTOR!
I'VE NEVER MET HIM! THAT IS ALL, I KNOW-- PROMISE!
PLEASE LET ME GO!!!
NOW, THAT WASN'T SO HARD, WAS IT?
THE TIGER. NOT VERY SUBTLE CONSIDERING THE TOKEN.
I HACKED INTO THE MINISTRY'S DATABASE BUT FOUND NO MATCH TO THE ALIAS.
SO I DECIDED TO DRAW THE SNAKE OUT INSTEAD.
I TOOK UP MY FATHER'S WORK. MET WITH HIS CONTACTS...

WHOOOOSH
BANG
BANG
....UPHELD OUR FAMILY'S TRADITION.
BANG
WHISHKK

I KNEW IT WOULDN'T BE LONG BEFORE THE TIGER TRACKED ME DOWN AS WELL. CAME OUT OF HIDING TO FIND ME.
SURE ENOUGH, ONE NIGHT MY WISH CAME TRUE.
ALERT
BEEP BEEP BEEP
I WAS NINETEEN. STILL NOT ENTIRELY TRAINED IN THE ART OF SELF-DEFENSE. I WAS CERTAINLY MORE OFFENSIVE THEN.
I KNOW YOU'RE COMING FOR ME, NO REASON TO SNEAK ABOUT IN YOUR OWN HOME.
THE TIGER I PRESUME...?

WHAT GAVE IT AWAY?
WOULDN'T TIGRESS BE MORE APPROPRIATE?
OH, YOU KNOW HOW THIS BUSINESS CAN BE. THE CLIENTS FIND OUT YOU'RE A WOMAN AND FORM THEIR OWN PRE-CONCEIVED NOTIONS ABOUT WHO YOU ARE, AND WHAT YOU CAN DO.
I KNOW THAT FEELING ALL TOO WELL. YOU KILLED MY FATHER...
...AND NOW YOU HAVE ABOUT THREE SECONDS BEFORE I PUT A BULLET THROUGH YOUR TEMPLE--
FATHER? I HEAR THAT'S HIS ALIAS NOW. DON'T YOU MEAN NAVAJ? THAT IS HIS REAL NAME, AFTER ALL.
HOW DO YOU--?
INTERESTING. I THOUGHT YOU WERE A CLEVER ONE, BUT APPARENTLY I OVERESTIMATED YOU.
YOU DON'T KNOW, DO YOU?
YOUR FATHER-- OR "THE FATHER"-- AS EVERYONE KNOWS HIM...

...WAS MY HUSBAND.
WHAT...
...YOU ARE... MOTHER?! BUT... YOU KILLED HIM? WHY?
I WANTED A LIFE OF MY OWN. BECAUSE HE TAUGHT ME ALL TOO WELL AND COULDN'T DEAL WITH THE REPERCUSSIONS OF WHAT I'D BECOME.
I WAS YOUR MOTHER, BUT THAT WAS A LONG TIME AGO. HE KNEW THE RISKS. HE KNOWS THERE CAN BE NO ATTACHMENTS IN THIS INDUSTRY.
NOW, YOU AS WELL...ARE JUST THE COMPETITION--
--AND YOU MUST BE ELIMINATED.
NOW, BOY!
GRRROWWWL
WHO KNEW TIGERS WERE FASTER THAN A PISTOL?
WITHOUT MY WEAPON, I THOUGHT BACK TO MY EXPERIENCE WITH THE MOUNTAIN LION. MY VERY FIRST KILL.
I MUST BE PATIENT.
I MUST WAIT--
PSSSSSSSSHHHHHH
--UNTIL OPPORTUNITY STRIKES
THUD

IMPRESSIVE.
I SEE HE TAUGHT YOU WELL.
HE TAUGHT ME EVERYTHING. IT WAS ONLY HIM, AFTER ALL.
I GUESS I DESERVE THAT.
BUT, I'M NOT GOING TO SHOOT YOU. YOU'RE MY ONLY DAUGHTER. BESIDES--
--IT WOULD BE TOO EASY.
CRAAAAK
THUNK
-COUGH!-
THIS LIFESTYLE DOESN'T SUIT YOU, RANI. EVEN I COULD SEE IT FROM THE MOMENT YOU WERE BORN! YOU'RE NOT LIKE US. GIVE IT UP!

GIVE IT UP, AND I WILL LET YOU LIVE, UNLIKE YOUR FATHER!
CRACK
SMACK
:-COUGH!-:
O-OKAY...
SO YOU ARE WISE, AFTER ALL.
GOOD-BYE, RANI. I ANTICIPATE WE WILL NEVER SEE EACH OTHER AG--
--WAIT...
TAKE THIS, IT'S YOURS... I NEVER WANTED IT ANYWAY.
RIIIIP
I KNEW HE WOULD EVENTUALLY GIVE THIS TO YOU.
YES...
...AND YOU ARE CORRECT. I AM *NOT* LIKE EITHER OF YOU... I MADE SOME SMALL MODIFICATIONS BEFORE YOU CAME.
A HIGH-GRADE EXPLOSIVE POWDER. MICRO-DETONATOR. YOU GET THE PICTURE...
CLICK

KABOOOM
I AM DIFFERENT.

THIS IS MY HOME.
BUILT UPON THE BLOOD OF MY FAMILY'S HISTORY.
MEMORIES THAT WILL NEVER FADE.
AND NO MATTER HOW MANY TIMES I MUST REBUILD, IT WILL ALWAYS BE HOME.
CORRECTION. MAKE THAT...
...OUR HOME.
END

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COVER A
INTRODUCING EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT:
Daisy

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#12
COVER B

The story so far

They are raised from their youth with strict obedience and brutally trained to protect and serve their respective masters with discipline, loyalty and often times violence if necessary. They are the Executive Assistant: Assassins.

Executive Assistant: Assassins

[DAISY]

PART 1 OF 4

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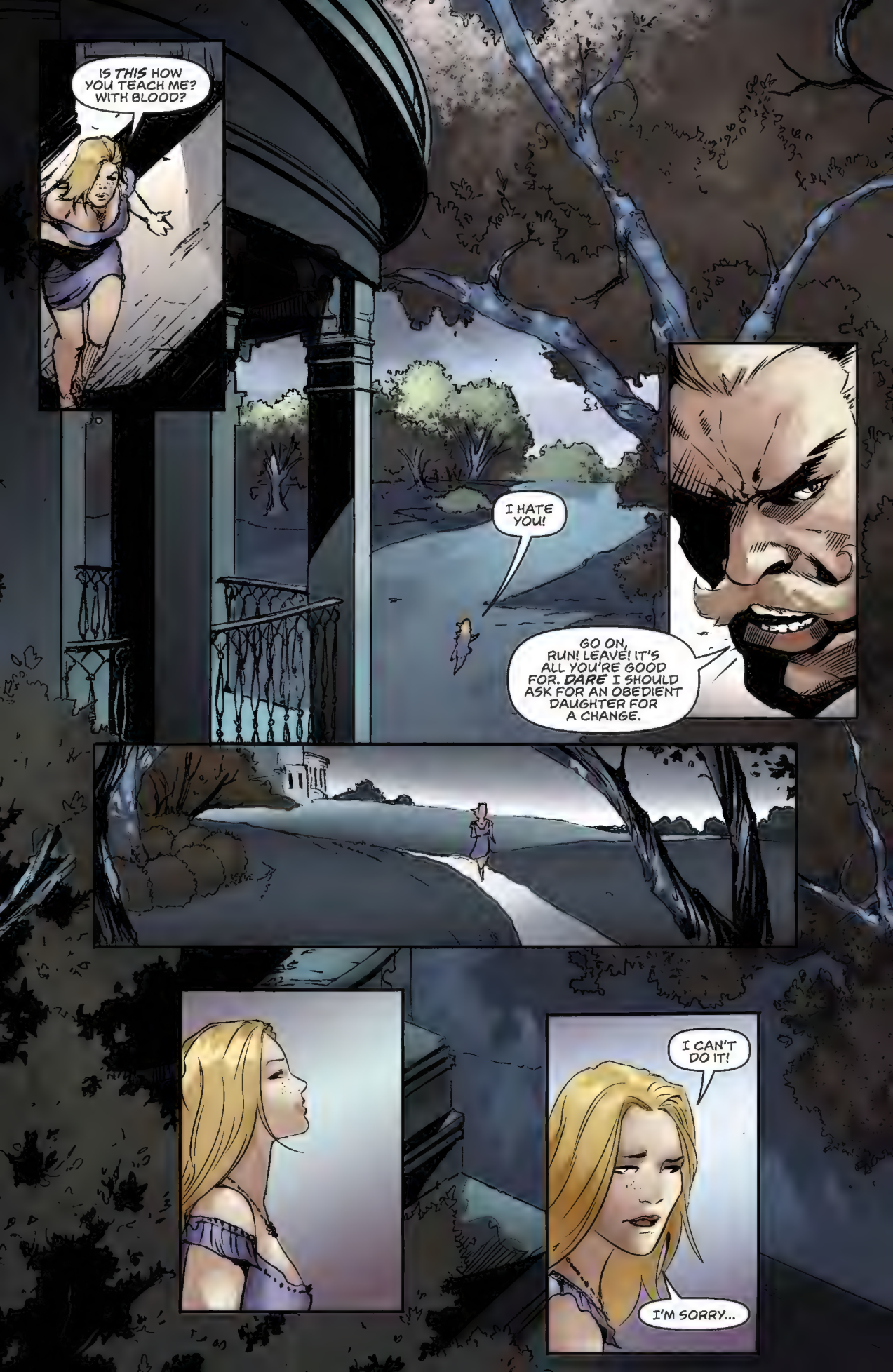
FRENCH QUARTER. NEW ORLEANS, LOUISIANA.
I HATE PARTIES
ALWAYS HAVE. DRUNKEN IDIOTS. TERRIBLE MUSIC. PEOPLE ACTING LIKE THEY DON'T HAVE A CARE IN THE WORLD — IT'S TOTAL
MAPLE & BISCUITS
NO.
...YOU MIGHT SAY MY INTERESTS ARE GROUNDED IN MORE REAL EMOTIONS
PASSION
ECSTASY

AND FEAR.
CHOKE!

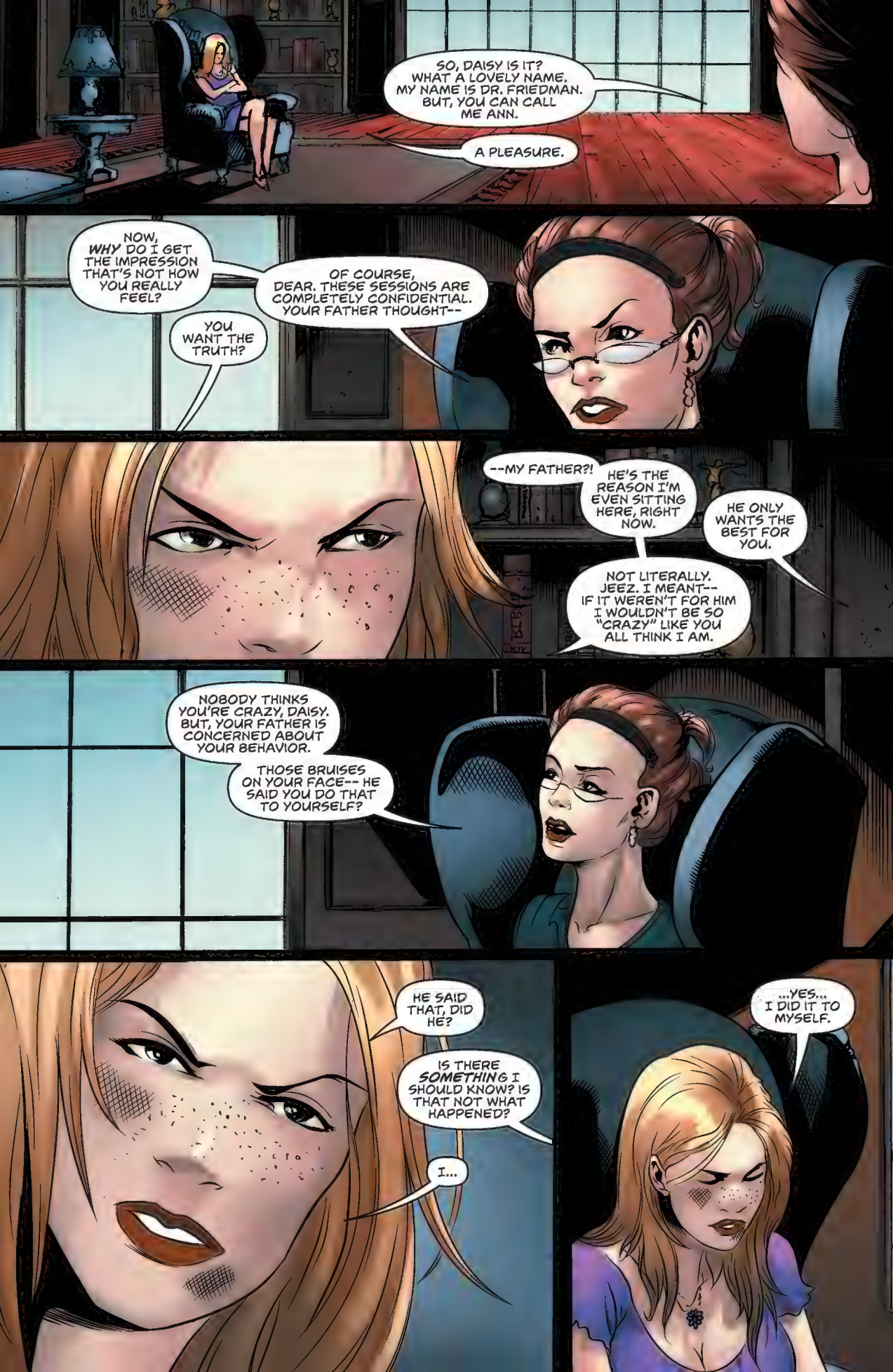
ACK... PLEAAAAASE!
DON'T WASTE YOUR PRECIOUS BREATH TRYING TO SPEAK. YOU ONLY HAVE A FEW MOMENTS LEFT-- CHERISH THEM.
I LOVE TO FEEL THE FEAR IN THEIR HEARTS. GENERATING FROM DEEP WITHIN THEIR SOUL AND OUT OF THEIR PORES.
ACKKKKKKK!!!
GGGGGGGHHHHHHH...
FEAR OF THE UNKNOWN...
FEAR OF WHAT WILL HAPPEN WHEN THEIR HEART STOPS BEATING. I CAN FEEL THAT FEAR TRANSFER INTO ME. IT RADIATES.
I LIVE FOR THIS FEELING.

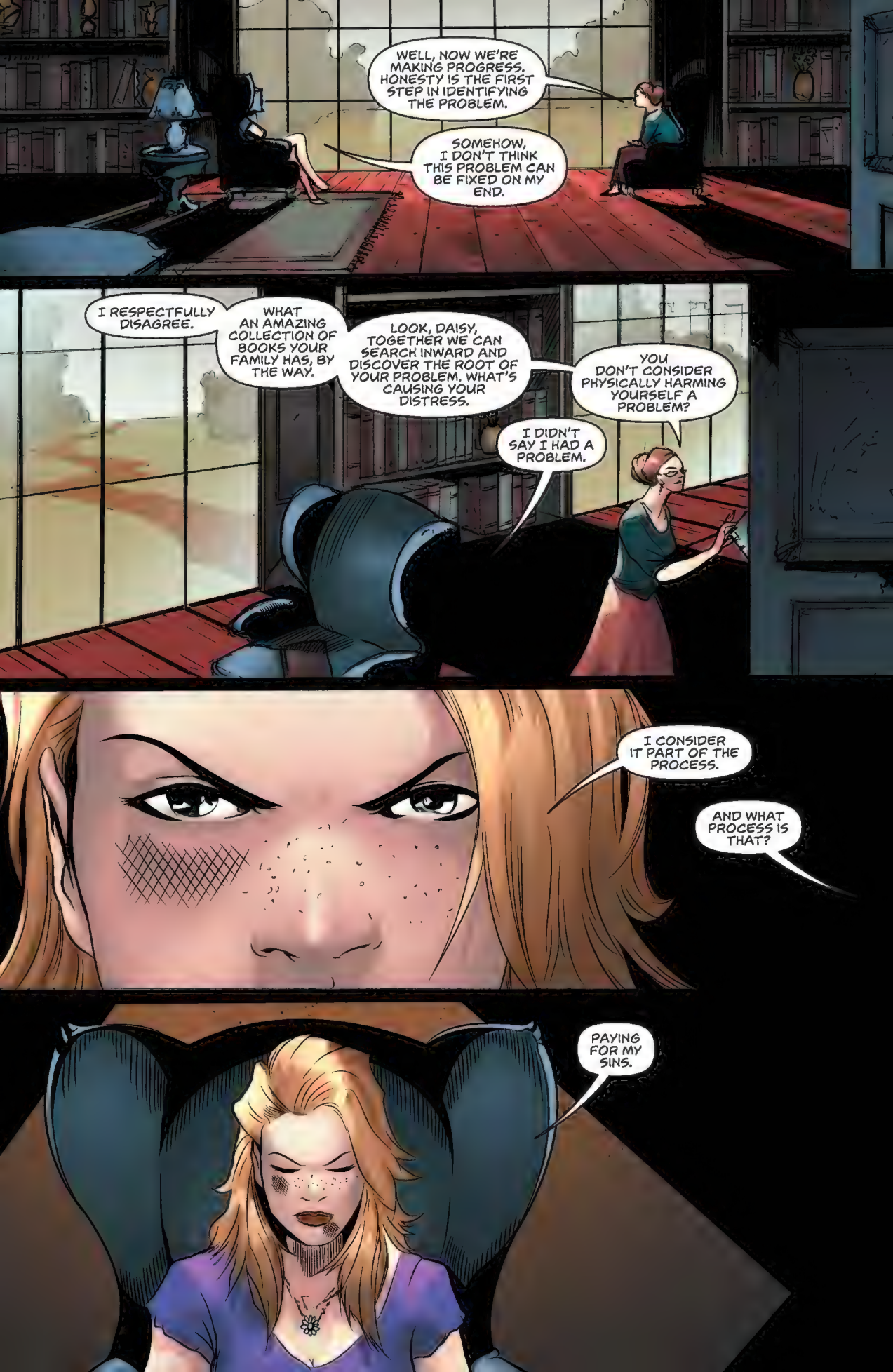
FOUR YEARS EARLIER.
SMACK
HOW DOES IT FEEL?!
DAD--STOP!
SHUT YOUR MOUTH! OR IS THAT TOO DIFFICULT FOR YOU CONSIDERING HOW MUCH TIME YOU SPEND IN THE COMPANY OF FILTHY MEN?!
IT'S NOT LIKE THAT, I SWEAR!
YOU SWEAR?! WHO ARE YOU TO SWEAR OATH TO ANYTHING? LOOK AROUND AT EVERYTHING I HAVE GIVEN YOU--AND HOW DO YOU REPAY ME? BY SNEAKING OUT OF THE HOUSE AND WHORING YOURSELF AROUND TOWN!
IT'S NOT WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE!
SMACK
PERCEPTION IS EVERYTHING, DAISY! DON'T YOU GET IT?! OUT THERE, WE MUST KEEP UP APPEARANCES! HAVE I TAUGHT YOU NOTHING?

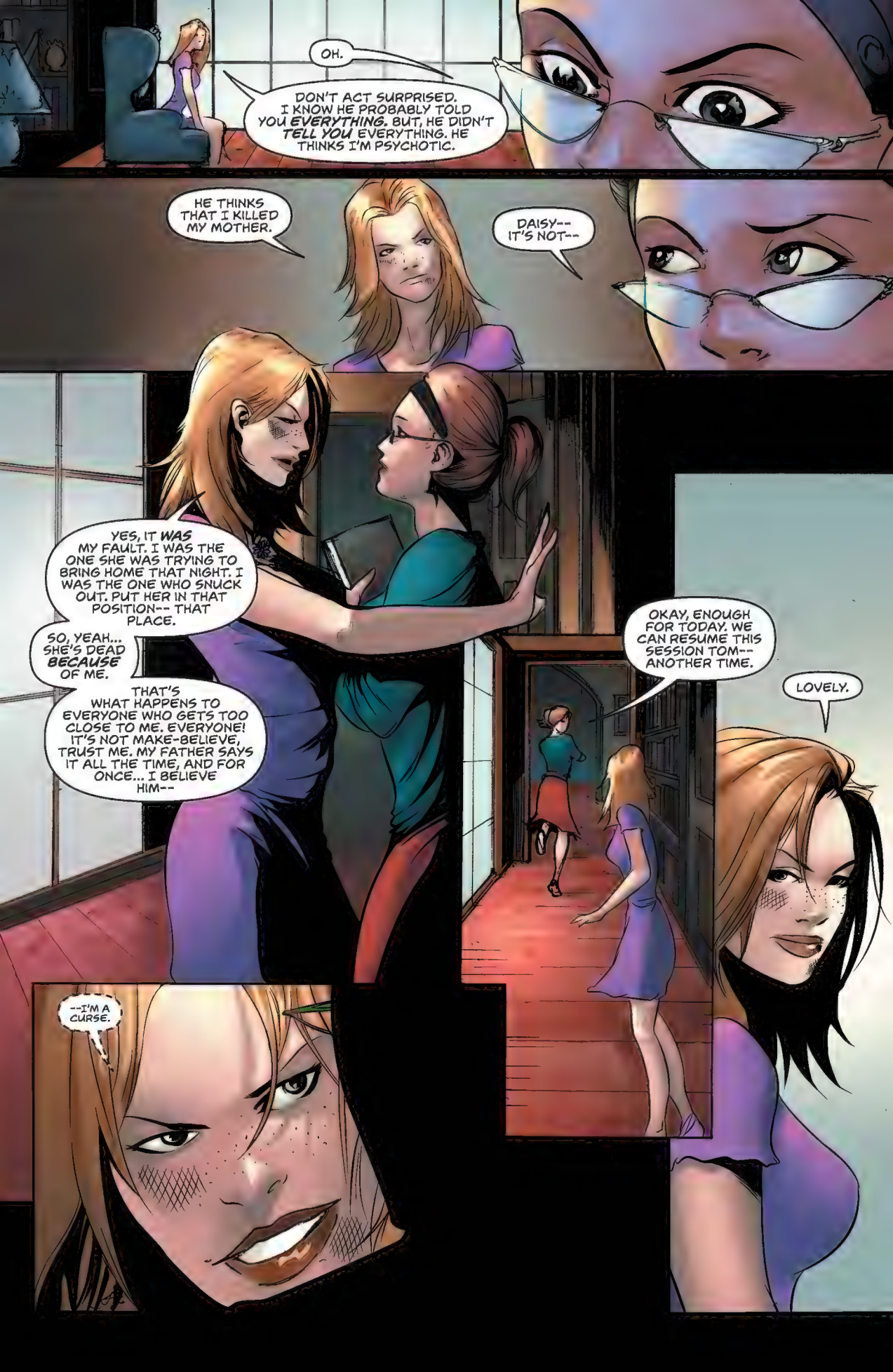

IS THIS HOW YOU TEACH ME? WITH BLOOD?
I HATE YOU!
GO ON, RUN! LEAVE! IT'S ALL YOU'RE GOOD FOR. DARE I SHOULD ASK FOR AN OBEDIENT DAUGHTER FOR A CHANGE.
I CAN'T DO IT!
I'M SORRY...

FRANKLIN
...MA.
I'VE TRIED, I REALLY HAVE-- BUT HE'S SO AWFUL. I CAN'T KEEP ON LIKE THIS. HE'LL BE THE END OF ME!
I KNOW WHAT YOU THINK-- I'M NOT STRONG ENOUGH TO GO ON.
BUT, I'M NOT WEAK. I WILL SHOW YOU ONE DAY, MA. I WILL SHOW HIM, AS WELL.

DUPONT SHIPPING YARD
YOU SMELL THAT, BOYS?
THAT'S OPPORTUNITY.
SMELLS LIKE $HIT TO ME. NO DIFFERENT THAN THE SEA YARD DISTRICTS OF TONGBAI.
YOU ARE WRONG. THERE IS MUCH MORE TO THEIR WAY OF LIFE OUT HERE THAN IN TONGBAI. WE CAN MAKE SOMETHING OF OURSELVES OUT HERE. CAPITALISM WILL SET US FREE, TRUST IN THAT.
IF YOU SAY SO.
IF YOU'RE NOT GOING TO SHARE IN THE MOMENT, WHY DON'T YOU GET THE REST OF THE CREW READY?
WITH PLEASURE.


SO, DAISY IS IT? WHAT A LOVELY NAME. MY NAME IS DR. FRIEDMAN. BUT, YOU CAN CALL ME ANN.
A PLEASURE.
NOW, WHY DO I GET THE IMPRESSION THAT'S NOT HOW YOU REALLY FEEL?
OF COURSE, DEAR. THESE SESSIONS ARE COMPLETELY CONFIDENTIAL. YOUR FATHER THOUGHT--
YOU WANT THE TRUTH?
--MY FATHER?!
HE'S THE REASON I'M EVEN SITTING HERE, RIGHT NOW.
HE ONLY WANTS THE BEST FOR YOU.
NOT LITERALLY. JEEZ. I MEANT-- IF IT WEREN'T FOR HIM I WOULDN'T BE SO "CRAZY" LIKE YOU ALL THINK I AM.
NOBODY THINKS YOU'RE CRAZY, DAISY. BUT, YOUR FATHER IS CONCERNED ABOUT YOUR BEHAVIOR.
THOSE BRUISES ON YOUR FACE-- HE SAID YOU DO THAT TO YOURSELF?
HE SAID THAT, DID HE?
IS THERE SOMETHING I SHOULD KNOW? IS THAT NOT WHAT HAPPENED?
I...
...YES... I DID IT TO MYSELF.


WELL, NOW WE'RE MAKING PROGRESS. HONESTY IS THE FIRST STEP IN IDENTIFYING THE PROBLEM.
SOMEHOW, I DON'T THINK THIS PROBLEM CAN BE FIXED ON MY END.
I RESPECTFULLY DISAGREE.
WHAT AN AMAZING COLLECTION OF BOOKS YOUR FAMILY HAS, BY THE WAY.
LOOK, DAISY, TOGETHER WE CAN SEARCH INWARD AND DISCOVER THE ROOT OF YOUR PROBLEM. WHAT'S CAUSING YOUR DISTRESS.
YOU DON'T CONSIDER PHYSICALLY HARMING YOURSELF A PROBLEM?
I DIDN'T SAY I HAD A PROBLEM.
I CONSIDER IT PART OF THE PROCESS.
AND WHAT PROCESS IS THAT?
PAYING FOR MY SINS.


OH.
DON'T ACT SURPRISED. I KNOW HE PROBABLY TOLD YOU EVERYTHING. BUT, HE DIDN'T TELL YOU EVERYTHING. HE THINKS I'M PSYCHOTIC.
HE THINKS THAT I KILLED MY MOTHER.
DAISY-- IT'S NOT--
YES, IT WAS MY FAULT. I WAS THE ONE SHE WAS TRYING TO BRING HOME THAT NIGHT. I WAS THE ONE WHO SNUCK OUT. PUT HER IN THAT POSITION-- THAT PLACE.
SO, YEAH... SHE'S DEAD BECAUSE OF ME.
THAT'S WHAT HAPPENS TO EVERYONE WHO GETS TOO CLOSE TO ME. EVERYONE! IT'S NOT MAKE-BELIEVE, TRUST ME. MY FATHER SAYS IT ALL THE TIME, AND FOR ONCE... I BELIEVE HIM--
OKAY, ENOUGH FOR TODAY. WE CAN RESUME THIS SESSION TOM-- ANOTHER TIME.
LOVELY.
--I'M A CURSE.

YOU KIDDING ME?
I'M MEETING YOU OUTTA KINDNESS, KID. YOU SHOW UP HERE, ASKING FOR TERMS LIKE SOME BIG SHOT. LIKE YOU GOT A STAKE IN THESE DOCKS, OR EVEN IN THIS COUNTRY. I RUN THE DOCK UNION, SON. WHICH MEANS I RUN EVERYTHING.
I MERELY ASK FOR THE SAME CHANCE YOU HAVE GIVEN TO OTHERS, TO OPERATE WITHOUT SCRUTINY. AND IN RETURN I WILL PAY THE SAME PERCENTAGE. I CONSIDER THIS A FAIR PROPOSAL.
YOU DON'T GET TO ASK ANYTHING, THAT'S MY POINT.
YOU F@€KS, ALWAYS LOOKING TO TAKEOVER. FIRST, YOU BOMB PEARL HARBOR, AND THEN YOU THINK YOU CAN COME TO MY DOCK AND CALL THE SHOTS?!?
THAT WAS THE JAPANESE. I AM FROM CHINA. DIFFERENT COUNTRIES.
SAME F@€KING DIFFERENCE!
EXIT
I CAN ASSURE YOU IT IS VERY MUCH NOT THE SAME THING, AND, I GROW TIRED OF YOUR VOICE...
...AND YOUR PETTY THREATS.
GRAB HIM.
WHAT...?

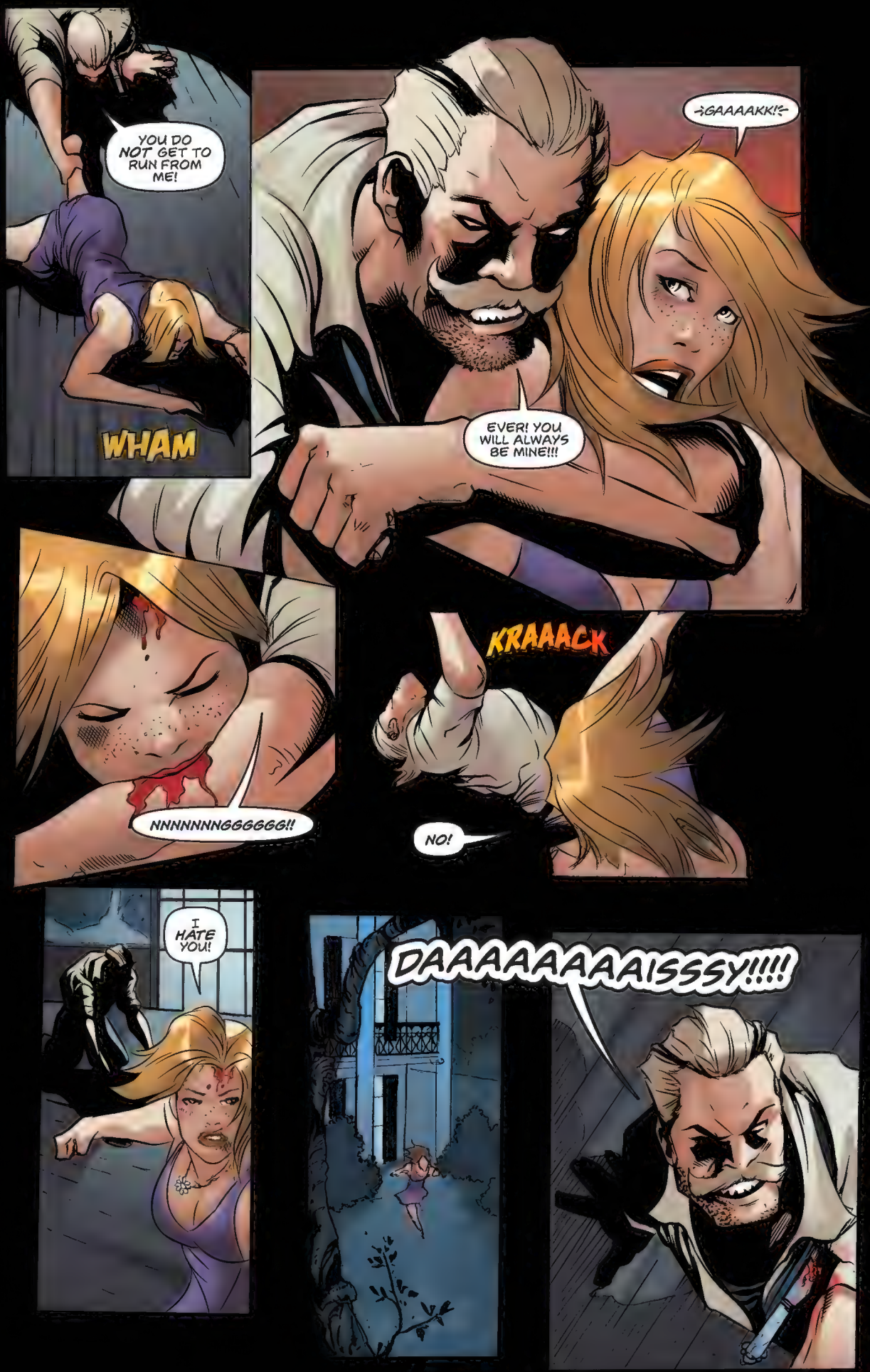
WAIT! YOU CAN'T F@&KING DO THIS!
PERHAPS, BUT, YOU WILL BE SILENT LONG BEFORE WE ARE MADE TO PAY FOR OUR MISDEEDS, THIS I PROMISE YOU.
YOUR VOICE. IT TRULY DOES GRIND MY EARS. WOULD IT BE BETTER IF WE REMOVED YOUR TONGUE TO ASSUAGE THEM?
NO, STOOOOP!
OR MAYBE WE'LL REMOVE YOUR HEAD ALTOGETHER. BETTER TO DEAL WITH SOMEONE WHO WILL NEGOTIATE FAIRLY, IN MY OPINION.
I'LL GIVE YOU WHAT YOU WANT! PLEASE--- I... WILL.
EXCELLENT. I AM GLAD WE WERE ABLE TO COME TO TERMS SO... AMICABLY.

LATER THAT EVENING...
MUNCH MUNCH
DAISY... I KNOW YOU THINK I AM TOO HARD ON YOU.
IF YOU ONLY KNEW WHAT I THOUGHT.

AM I A MIND-READER? DO I KNOW WHAT GOES ON IN THAT MIND OF YOURS? NO I DO NOT.
BUT, I AM YOUR FATHER. YOU ARE MY POSSESSION.
POSSESSION?
YES. YOU BELONG TO ME.
WHEN YOUR MOTHER WAS MURDERED, GOD BLESS HER SOUL, I DID BLAME YOU FOR IT... BUT, I HAVE COME TO LEARN THAT IS NOT THE ENTIRE TRUTH.
THE FAULT IS MINE, AS WELL.
MY FATHER, WHEN I WAS A YOUNG BOY-- WHEN I GOT OUT OF LINE-- HE WOULD TEACH ME THE ERROR OF MY WAYS. OFTEN-TIMES IT WAS NOT PLEASANT, BUT THAT IS WHAT IT TAKES WHEN WE HAVE STRAYED FROM OUR INTENDED PATH.
AND YOU HAVE STRAYED FAR, YOUNG LADY.
YES-- I'M THE ONE OFF THE DEEP END.

YOU SEE, THAT IS WHAT I'M TALKING ABOUT RIGHT THERE. EVERY TIME I ATTEMPT TO SPEAK TO YOU LIKE A GROWNUP, YOU SHOW YOUR TRUE IMMATURITY.
A GROWNUP? YOU CALL BEATING ME WITH YOUR BARE HANDS GROWNUP?!?
YOUNG LADY-- SIT DOWN!
NO! I'M TIRED OF PRETENDING WE'RE SOME PERFECT FATHER AND DAUGHTER WHEN WE'RE NOT! ALL YOU CARE ABOUT IS BUILDING YOUR STUPID EMPIRE. MAKING A FORTUNE!
YOU DON'T GIVE A $HIT ABOUT ME!
YOU WILL SIT DOWN, OR I WILL MAKE YOU SIT YOUNG LADY.
GO AHEAD-- KILL ME! I DON'T CARE ANYMORE! I'D RATHER BE DEAD THAN HAVE TO SPEND ANOTHER MOMENT WITH YOU!
THAT IS IT...
...I'VE HAD ENOUGH OF YOUR $HIT!
SLAM

I WILL NOT KILL YOU-- BECAUSE THAT WOULD BE THE EASY WAY OUT. WHICH YOU ALWAYS TAKE! NO, YOU WILL LEARN, DAISY-- IF I HAVE TO BEAT YOU WITHIN AN INCH OF YOUR LIFE!
-COUGH!-
AHHHHH!!
YOU LITTLE BITCH!
NO!


YOU DO NOT GET TO RUN FROM ME!
WHAM
-:GAAAAKK!:-
EVER! YOU WILL ALWAYS BE MINE!!!
KRAAACK
NNNNNNNGGGGGG!!
NO!
I HATE YOU!
DAAAAAAAAISSSY!!!!

IT WON'T BE LONG NOW.*
WITH THE UNION ON OUR SIDE, THE PORT WILL BE OURS IN NO TIME. IT WAS MUCH EASIER THAN EXPECTED.
*EDITOR'S NOTE: SPOKEN IN MANDARIN.
THE LOOK ON HIS FACE-- YOU SHOULD HAVE SEEN IT.
THUNK
HOLD ON...
...LET ME CALL YOU BACK.

HELLO...?
YOU CHOSE THE WRONG TARGET A$$HOLE. SHOW YOURSELF.
KLUNK
SHOW YOURSELF!

WHO...
...WHO ARE YOU..?
HEY!
HEY-- IT'S OKAY. EVERYTHING IS GOING TO BE ALL RIGHT.
YOU'RE IN GOOD HANDS.
To Be Continued!
Executive Assistant: Assassins #13

CELEBRATING THE FIRST DECADE OF ASPEN COMICS!
ASPEN
EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT ASSASSINS
Vince HERNANDEZ
Lori HANSON
Joe KENNEDY
Teodoro GONZALEZ
Josh REED
BLOCKADE ENTERTAINMENT
#13
COVER A

CELEBRATING THE FIRST DECADE OF ASPEN COMICS!

ASPEN

EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT ASSASSINS

Vince HERNANDEZ
Lori HANSON
Joe KENNEDY
Teodoro GONZALEZ
Josh REED

BLOCKADE ENTERTAINMENT

#13

COVER B

The story so far

After a brutal encounter with her possessive and deadly father Daisy managed to escape his wrath but was not able to get [illegible] her current state. Beaten both [illegible] emotionally, the young girl found solace in the most unexpected place: the doorstep of the determined and [illegible] entrepreneur Shen.

EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT: ASSASSINS

DAISY

PART 2 OF 4

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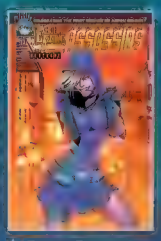

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WES HARTMAN

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ELIZABETH TORQUE

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YOU'RE CLEARLY ENJOYING YOURSELF.
WHAT, A GIRL CAN'T ENJOY SHOPPING?
YOU MAY ENJOY ANYTHING YOU LIKE. I TAKE PLEASURE IN WATCHING YOUR ENJOYMENT.
YOU KNOW, I CAN'T TELL IF YOU'RE FULL OF S#%T OR IF YOU GENUINELY CARE ABOUT MY WELLBEING. OR, IF YOU'RE JUST LOOKING TO GET UNDER THIS DRESS.
CAN'T A MAN ASPIRE TO ALL THREE?
HA! THAT'S WHY I LOVE YOU.
"I LOVE THE GIRL..."

...YET, SHE TESTS MY RESOLVE LIKE NONE OTHER.
I CAN'T HAVE HER RUNNING LOOSE ON THE STREETS OF MY OWN CITY, DRAGGING MY NAME THROUGH THE MUCK ALONG WITH ALL OF MY HARD WORK. CAUSING IRREPARABLE DAMAGE TO EVERYTHING I'VE WORKED TO ACHIEVE...
...TO PROTECT.
NO...
...WE NEED TO FIND DAISY. PUT A STOP TO THIS NONSENSE-- AND TEACH HER A LESSON WHILE DOING SO.
YES, BUT SIR... IS *THIS* THE RIGHT PLAY HERE? I MEAN, OUTSOURCING TO FOREIGN CLIENTS IS NOT ADVISED. THINGS COULD GET MESSY.
SEE THAT IT'S DONE. I WILL NOT HAVE MY USUAL CHANNELS INVOLVED IN MY CLOSE, PERSONAL AFFAIRS. WE OUTSOURCE AND THEN WE PUT OUT THE SOURCE-- DO YOU UNDERSTAND, PARSONS?
GRAVELY, SIR.
YOU THINK I'M A FOOL, AM I RIGHT?
YOU LIE UNDER THREAT OF FEAR.
NOT AT ALL, SIR.

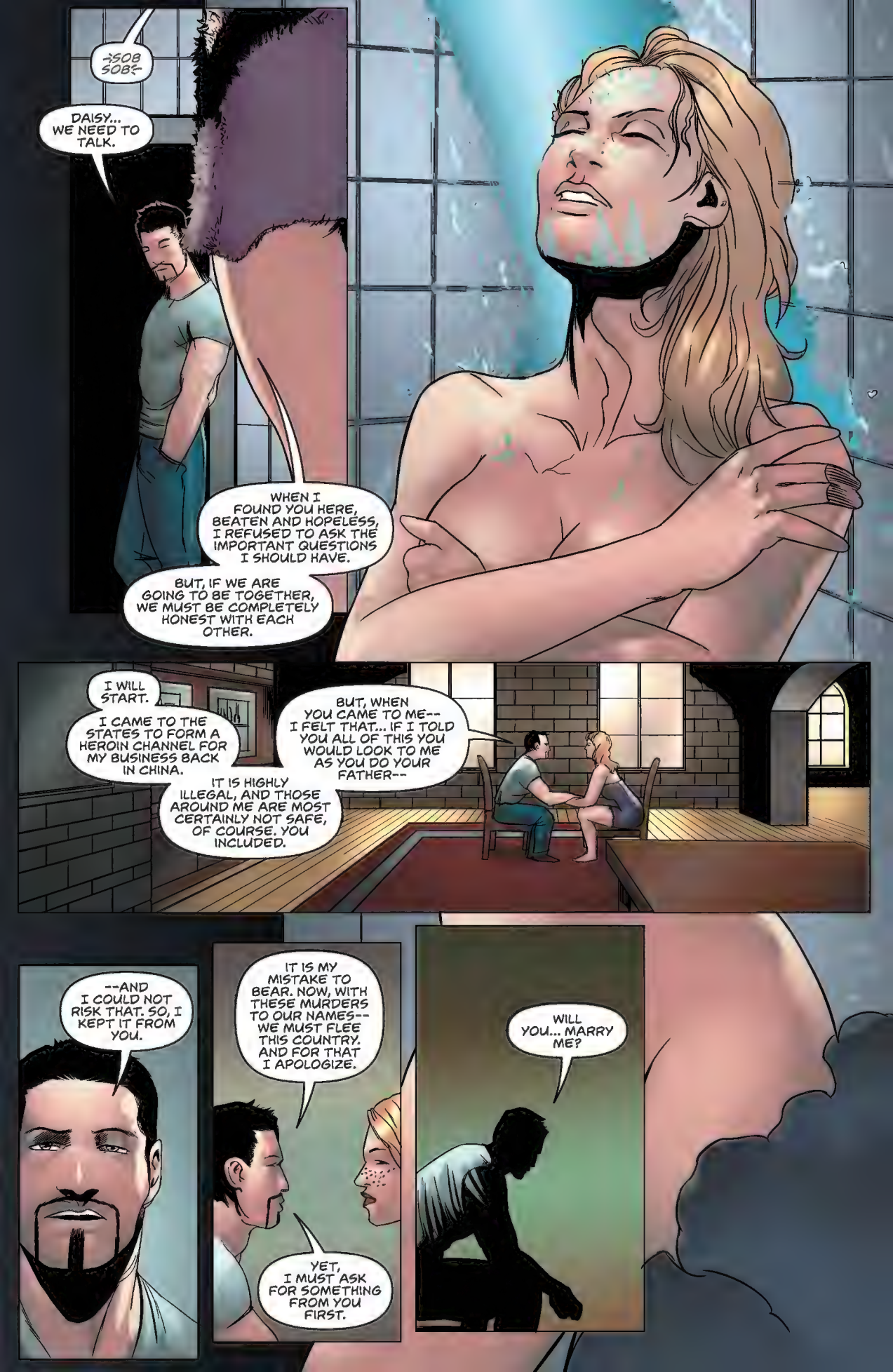
"I DON'T MIND YOUR FEAR, TO BE TRUTHFUL..."
"...I WELCOME IT."
"WHEN PEOPLE FEAR YOU, THEY HONOR YOU. AND IN TURN YOU CAN CONTROL THEM. THAT IS WHAT IS MISSING IN MY DAUGHTER... CONTROL."
"FOR AS LONG AS SHE HAS WALKED ON TWO LEGS, DAISY HAD LET ME GUIDE HER, AND MOLD HER INTO THE WOMAN I KNOW SHE COULD BE-- SOMEONE I COULD TAKE GREAT PRIDE IN."
"YET, SOMEWHERE A FRACTURE IN OUR RELATIONSHIP BEGAN TO FESTER... TO GROW INTO SOMETHING MORE. I MUSE, BUT I KNOW WHEN THAT TIME CAME-- WHEN HER MOTHER WAS TAKEN FROM US. AND I REFUSE TO LOSE DAISY AS WELL."
"OUR BOND IS BROKEN."

"THAT IS WHY I MUST RESTORE IT-- FOR OUR FAMILY'S HONOR DEPENDS ON IT."
WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE FOR DINNER?
EXCUSE ME? YOU? COOKING?
HEY-- I CAN COOK. JUST BECAUSE YOU SAVED MY LIFE DOESN'T MEAN I'M SOME DAMSEL IN DISTRESS.
JERK!
DAMSEL IN DISTRESS? HARDLY. I'D SAY YOU'RE MORE LIKE A DAMSEL THAT CAUSES DISTRESS.
CLICK
QUIET. DID YOU HEAR THAT?
HEAR WHAT?
KRACK
SHEN!!!
WHAT DO YOU WANT?! MONEY?!
WE HAVE NOT COME FOR MONEY, YOUNG GIRL...
...WE HAVE COME TO RECLAIM YOUR FATHER'S PROPERTY.

YOU ARE CHINESE, LIKE ME. WHY ARE YOU DOING THIS?
HE BEAT HER TO WITHIN AN INCH OF HER LIFE. AND YOU WOULD TAKE HER BACK TO HIM?!
DO NOT UTTER NATIONALISTIC LOYALTIES, FOOL. IN THIS COUNTRY-- THE ONLY LOYALTY IS TO CURRENCY.
IT'S NOT OUR CONCERN-- HER WELLBEING.
I WILL NOT GO BACK.
SHUT YOUR MOUTH!
I WILL NEVER GO BACK.
I SAID--
--I WILL NEVER GO BACK!!!
AHHHHHHHHHHH!!!
SHE JUST BIT HIM! F@#KING B&*CH!
DON'T SHOOT! WE NEED HER ALIVE!
BASTARDS!

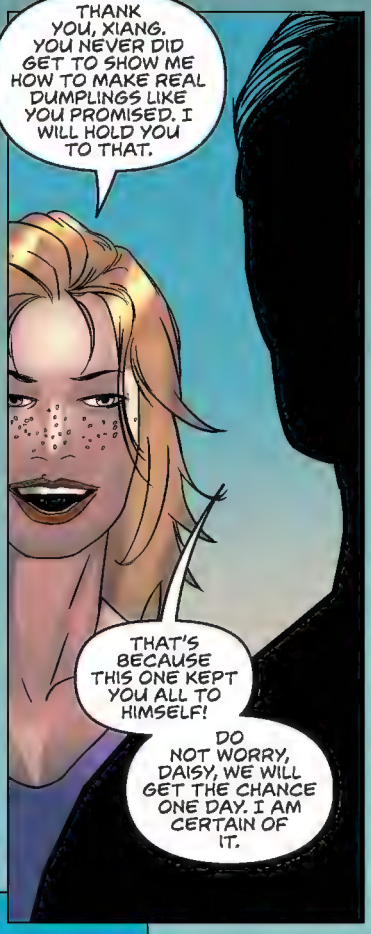
XIN!
BANG
CRACK
DAISY! ARE YOU ALRIGHT?
SHEN... I WILL NEVER GO BACK. NEVER GO BACK. NEVER...
...NEVER...
DAISY... WE MUST LEAVE.

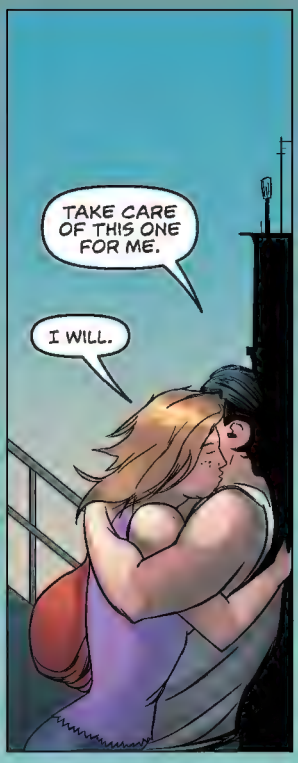
THE NEXT DAY.
HOW MANY?
UNDERSTOOD. I WON'T LIE, THIS IS NOT PLEASING NEWS. YOU WILL HEAR FROM ME SOON.
THE CHINAMAN SHE IS WITH, HE TOOK OUT THE CLIENTS.
ONE MAN TOOK OUT ALL THREE?
APPARENTLY, THIS MAN IS QUITE THE ENTREPRENEUR-- AND ALSO HAS QUITE THE PAST FROM WHAT MY SOURCE TELLS ME. HE CAME HERE RECENTLY AND HAS MADE HIS PRESENCE KNOWN.
MAKE SURE THE SHIPMENT IS COUNTED AND DIVIDED BEFORE SUNDOWN.
CHINA
AND FIND OUT EVERYTHING ABOUT THIS SHEN.


SOB SOB
DAISY... WE NEED TO TALK.
WHEN I FOUND YOU HERE, BEATEN AND HOPELESS, I REFUSED TO ASK THE IMPORTANT QUESTIONS I SHOULD HAVE.
BUT, IF WE ARE GOING TO BE TOGETHER, WE MUST BE COMPLETELY HONEST WITH EACH OTHER.
I WILL START.
I CAME TO THE STATES TO FORM A HEROIN CHANNEL FOR MY BUSINESS BACK IN CHINA.
IT IS HIGHLY ILLEGAL, AND THOSE AROUND ME ARE MOST CERTAINLY NOT SAFE, OF COURSE, YOU INCLUDED.
BUT, WHEN YOU CAME TO ME-- I FELT THAT... IF I TOLD YOU ALL OF THIS YOU WOULD LOOK TO ME AS YOU DO YOUR FATHER--
--AND I COULD NOT RISK THAT. SO, I KEPT IT FROM YOU.
IT IS MY MISTAKE TO BEAR. NOW, WITH THESE MURDERS TO OUR NAMES-- WE MUST FLEE THIS COUNTRY. AND FOR THAT I APOLOGIZE.
YET, I MUST ASK FOR SOMETHING FROM YOU FIRST.
WILL YOU... MARRY ME?

...
OF COURSE, I WILL. YES! YES!
THANK YOU SHEN. FOR SAVING ME. FOR EVERYTHING.
I LOVE YOU.
AND I LOVE YOU. NO MORE SECRETS... I PROMISE.

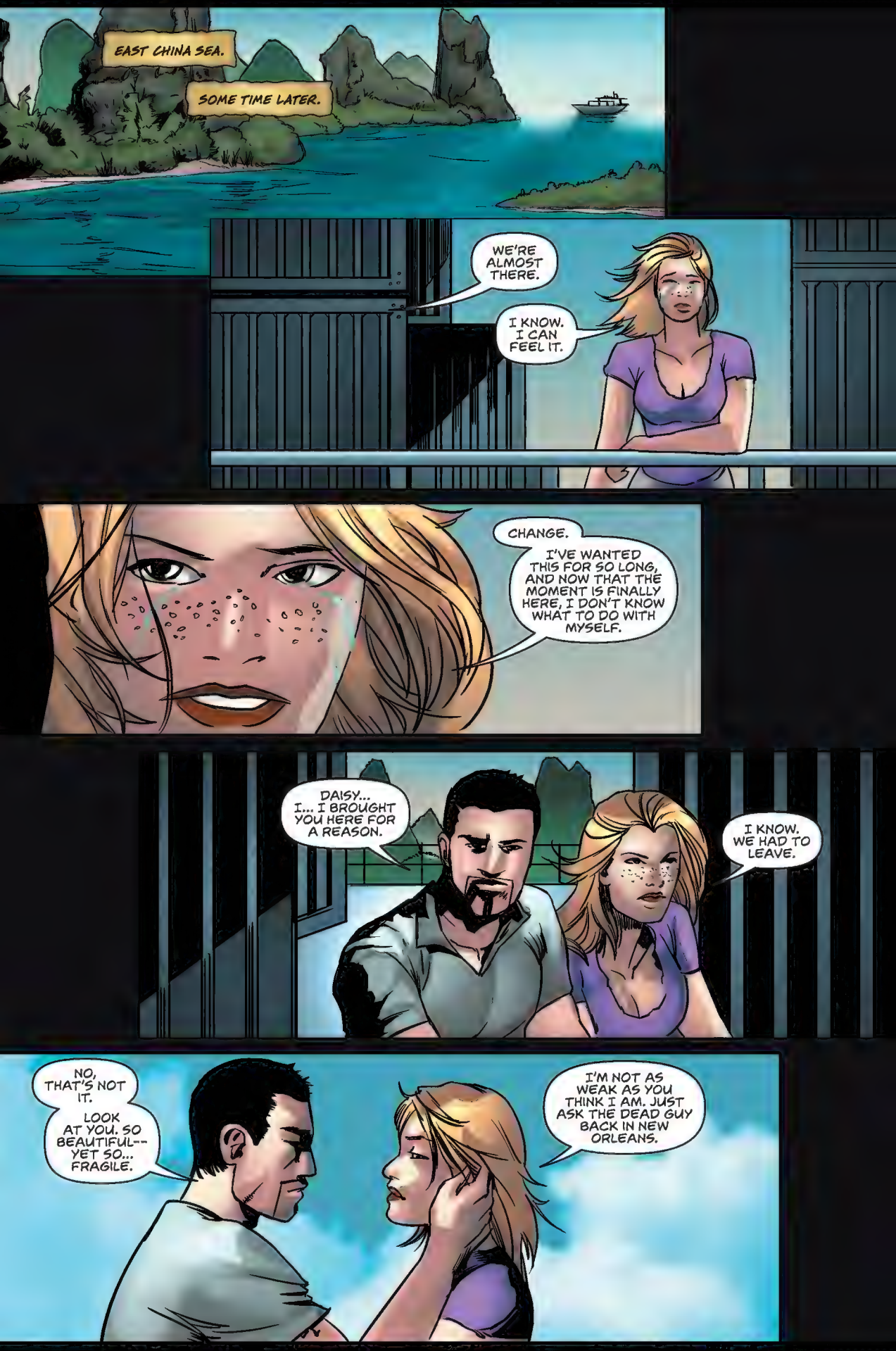
YOU'RE ALL SET. ARE YOU SURE YOU WANT TO DO THIS? I CAN TAKE CARE OF OUR ASSETS HERE-- BUT STILL--
--IT'S THE ONLY WAY. WE ARE WANTED HERE. IF WE STAY I WOULD ONLY FURTHER ADD PROBLEMS TO OUR DEALINGS. WE NEED TO AVOID THE HEAT FOR AWHILE.
I TRUST YOU, XIANG. I KNOW IT IS NOT WISE IN THIS INDUSTRY, BUT I KNOW YOU WILL STRENGTHEN OUR BUSINESS IN MY ABSENCE.
OF COURSE.

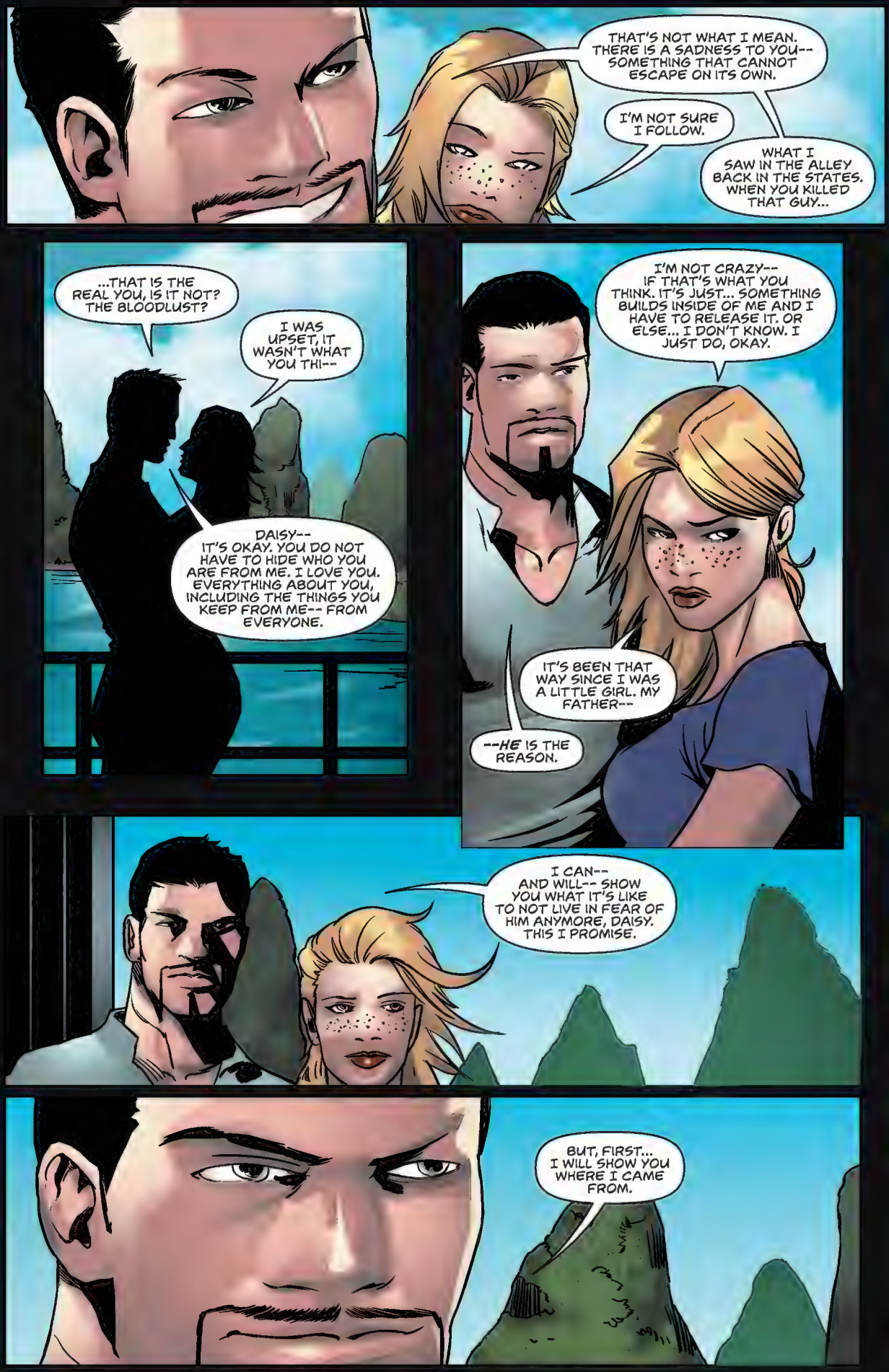

THANK YOU, XIANG. YOU NEVER DID GET TO SHOW ME HOW TO MAKE REAL DUMPLINGS LIKE YOU PROMISED. I WILL HOLD YOU TO THAT.
THAT'S BECAUSE THIS ONE KEPT YOU ALL TO HIMSELF!
DO NOT WORRY, DAISY, WE WILL GET THE CHANCE ONE DAY. I AM CERTAIN OF IT.


TAKE CARE OF THIS ONE FOR ME.
I WILL.

THANK YOU, I MEAN IT.
EVERYTHING WILL BE TAKEN CARE OF, SHEN...

...REST ASSURED.


EAST CHINA SEA.
SOME TIME LATER.
WE'RE ALMOST THERE.
I KNOW. I CAN FEEL IT.
CHANGE.
I'VE WANTED THIS FOR SO LONG, AND NOW THAT THE MOMENT IS FINALLY HERE, I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO WITH MYSELF.
DAISY... I... I BROUGHT YOU HERE FOR A REASON.
I KNOW. WE HAD TO LEAVE.
NO, THAT'S NOT IT.
LOOK AT YOU. SO BEAUTIFUL-- YET SO... FRAGILE.
I'M NOT AS WEAK AS YOU THINK I AM. JUST ASK THE DEAD GUY BACK IN NEW ORLEANS.


THAT'S NOT WHAT I MEAN. THERE IS A SADNESS TO YOU-- SOMETHING THAT CANNOT ESCAPE ON ITS OWN.
I'M NOT SURE I FOLLOW.
WHAT I SAW IN THE ALLEY BACK IN THE STATES. WHEN YOU KILLED THAT GUY...
...THAT IS THE REAL YOU, IS IT NOT? THE BLOODLUST?
I WAS UPSET, IT WASN'T WHAT YOU THI--
DAISY-- IT'S OKAY. YOU DO NOT HAVE TO HIDE WHO YOU ARE FROM ME. I LOVE YOU. EVERYTHING ABOUT YOU, INCLUDING THE THINGS YOU KEEP FROM ME-- FROM EVERYONE.
I'M NOT CRAZY-- IF THAT'S WHAT YOU THINK. IT'S JUST... SOMETHING BUILDS INSIDE OF ME AND I HAVE TO RELEASE IT. OR ELSE... I DON'T KNOW. I JUST DO, OKAY.
IT'S BEEN THAT WAY SINCE I WAS A LITTLE GIRL. MY FATHER--
--HE IS THE REASON.
I CAN-- AND WILL-- SHOW YOU WHAT IT'S LIKE TO NOT LIVE IN FEAR OF HIM ANYMORE, DAISY. THIS I PROMISE.
BUT, FIRST... I WILL SHOW YOU WHERE I CAME FROM.

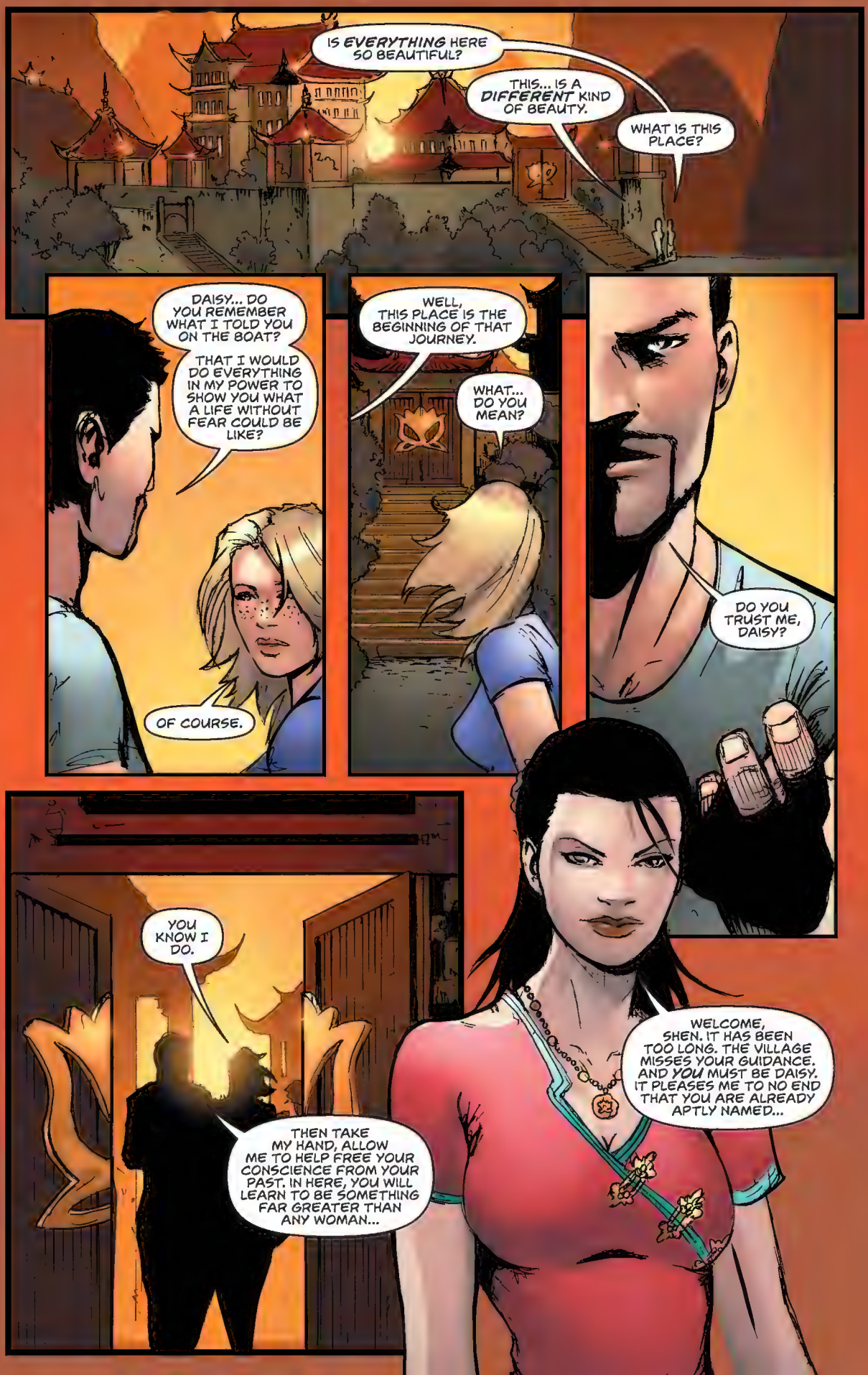
THE VILLAGE OF BAISHUITAI.
IT'S BEAUTIFUL OUT HERE.
THIS IS WHERE I GREW UP. WHERE I CALLED HOME FOR A TIME.
I WONDER WHAT YOU WERE LIKE AS A CHILD. PROBABLY CUTE AS A BUTTON.
I'VE NOT HEARD THAT EXPRESSION BEFORE. BUT, I WILL GLADLY ACCEPT IT. NO, UNFORTUNATELY MY CHILDHOOD WAS ANYTHING BUT CUTE.
"MY MOTHER AND FATHER PERISHED WHEN THIS VILLAGE'S POOR AND FAMISHED REBELLED AGAINST THE LOCAL WARLORD AT THE TIME, MENG YAO. HE SLAUGHTERED ANYONE WHO OPPOSED HIM-- INCLUDING MY KIN."
"I WAS SUPPOSED TO BE MURDERED AS THEY WERE, YET ONE OF MENG YAO'S UNDERLINGS, A MAN NAMED WEI, CHOSE TO ALLOW ME TO LIVE... FOR HIS OWN REASONS."
"HE TAUGHT ME THE MEANING OF HARD WORK, HOW TO SURVIVE ON MY OWN..."
"...AND ALSO ABOUT LOYALTY."
HE BRUTALLY TOOK MENG YAO'S PLACE AS THE WARLORD OF OUR VILLAGE...
"...YET, HE BOUND ME TO HIS ACTIONS THROUGH MY OWN. I HAD TO SPILL BLOOD TOO. IT WAS MY DESTINY. CUNNING HE WAS, INDEED."
YES, HE TAUGHT ME MUCH OF THE REALITIES OF LIFE.

THAT'S... HORRIBLE. NO CHILD SHOULD HAVE TO BE RAISED LIKE THAT.
WE ALL HAVE OUR DEMONS.
YES.
"IT WASN'T SO BAD. AFTER WEI PASSED AWAY, I INHERITED HIS ENTERPRISE. THE VILLAGE LOOKED UP TO ME FOR A TIME, I SUPPOSE."
"BUT, I NEVER LOST SIGHT OF WHERE I CAME FROM. I WASN'T BORN THIS WAY, AND NEITHER WERE YOU."
"YOU CAN CONTROL THE ANGER INSIDE.."
"...AND MAKE IT WORK TO YOUR ADVANTAGE."
GO. AND DO NOT FORGET WHO SPARED YOUR LIFE THIS DAY. WHO OFFERS THIS VILLAGE FORGIVENESS IN THE FACE OF DISRESPECT.

YOU ARE SUCH A WONDERFUL MAN. HOW DID I EVER FIND YOU?
I'M CERTAIN IT WAS FATE THAT BROUGHT YOU TO ME.
HERE, I WANT TO SHOW YOU SOMETHING.
THIS LAND MAY SEEM CORRUPT FROM WHAT I TOLD YOU, BUT, THERE IS GREAT BEAUTY IN ABUNDANCE.
WOW...
THE MINERAL TERRACES.
IT'S SO PRETTY.
THANK YOU FOR BRINGING ME HERE.
DO NOT THANK ME UNTIL YOU'VE SEEN EVERYTHING.

THE LINE IS SAFE. ALL THE ESSENTIALS HAVE BEEN POSTED TO THE SECURE MESSAGE BOARD. HER PHOTO IS INCLUDED...
...SHE WILL NOT BE HARD TO SPOT.
UNDERSTOOD. THAT SUM WILL NOT BE A PROBLEM. AN INCENTIVE BONUS WILL BE ADDED IF THE ONE KNOWN AS "SHEN" IS TAKEN CARE OF, AS WELL. HIS PARTNER XIANG HAS UPLOADED HIS PHOTO.
DEAD OR ALIVE-- IT DOESN'T MATTER.
YOU UNDERSTAND WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE, CORRECT?

IT WILL NOT BE A PROBLEM.
MAKE SURE THE CURRENCY IS THERE WHEN I CHECK, IT WILL NOT TAKE LONG.


IS EVERYTHING HERE SO BEAUTIFUL?
THIS... IS A DIFFERENT KIND OF BEAUTY.
WHAT IS THIS PLACE?
DAISY... DO YOU REMEMBER WHAT I TOLD YOU ON THE BOAT?
THAT I WOULD DO EVERYTHING IN MY POWER TO SHOW YOU WHAT A LIFE WITHOUT FEAR COULD BE LIKE?
OF COURSE.
WELL, THIS PLACE IS THE BEGINNING OF THAT JOURNEY.
WHAT... DO YOU MEAN?
DO YOU TRUST ME, DAISY?
YOU KNOW I DO.
THEN TAKE MY HAND, ALLOW ME TO HELP FREE YOUR CONSCIENCE FROM YOUR PAST. IN HERE, YOU WILL LEARN TO BE SOMETHING FAR GREATER THAN ANY WOMAN...
WELCOME, SHEN. IT HAS BEEN TOO LONG. THE VILLAGE MISSES YOUR GUIDANCE. AND YOU MUST BE DAISY. IT PLEASES ME TO NO END THAT YOU ARE ALREADY APTLY NAMED...

...THE ACADEMY HAS BEEN EXPECTING YOU.

To Be Continued!
Executive Assistant: Assassins #14

CELEBRATING THE FIRST DECADE OF ASPEN COMICS!
ASPEN
EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT ASSASSINS
Vince HERNANDEZ
Lori HANSON
Joe KENNEDY
Teodoro GONZALEZ
Josh REED
BLOCKADE ENTERTAINMENT
#14
COVER A
TEO

CELEBRATING THE FIRST DECADE OF ASPEN COMICS!
ASPEN
EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT ASSASSINS
W. HERNANDEZ
Lori HANSON
Joe KENNEDY
Teodoro GONZALEZ
Josh ABEL
BLOCKADE ENTERTAINMENT
#14
COVER B

The story so far

Daisy learns that escaping her father's very large shadow is easier said than done as Shen and her manage to fight off his hired hit-dudes but killed them in the process. Deciding to get out of sight, the pair [illegible] and Shen's homeland in haste. However, the biggest change for Daisy [illegible] later in the form of her arrival at the doorsteps of an Executive Assistant Academy.

[illegible] Assassin

[DAISY]

PART 3 OF 4

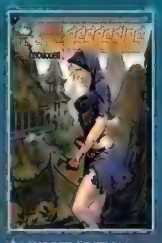
Written by
Vince Hernandez

Pencils by
Lori "Cross" Hanson

Digital Inks by
Joe Kennedy

Colors by
Teodoro Gonzalez

Lettering by
Josh Reed



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Lori Hanson
Teodoro Gonzalez

B: Direct Edition
Elizabeth Torque

C: Retailer Incentive
"Assassin" Edition
Pasquale Qualano
Teodoro Gonzalez

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Lettering supervised by Dreamer Design

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Production Assistant Chaz Riggs Office Coordinator Erick Raymundo Assistant Chris Rupp Executive Designer/Production Mark Ronlan

EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT: ASSASSINS™ Vol. 1 Issue 14

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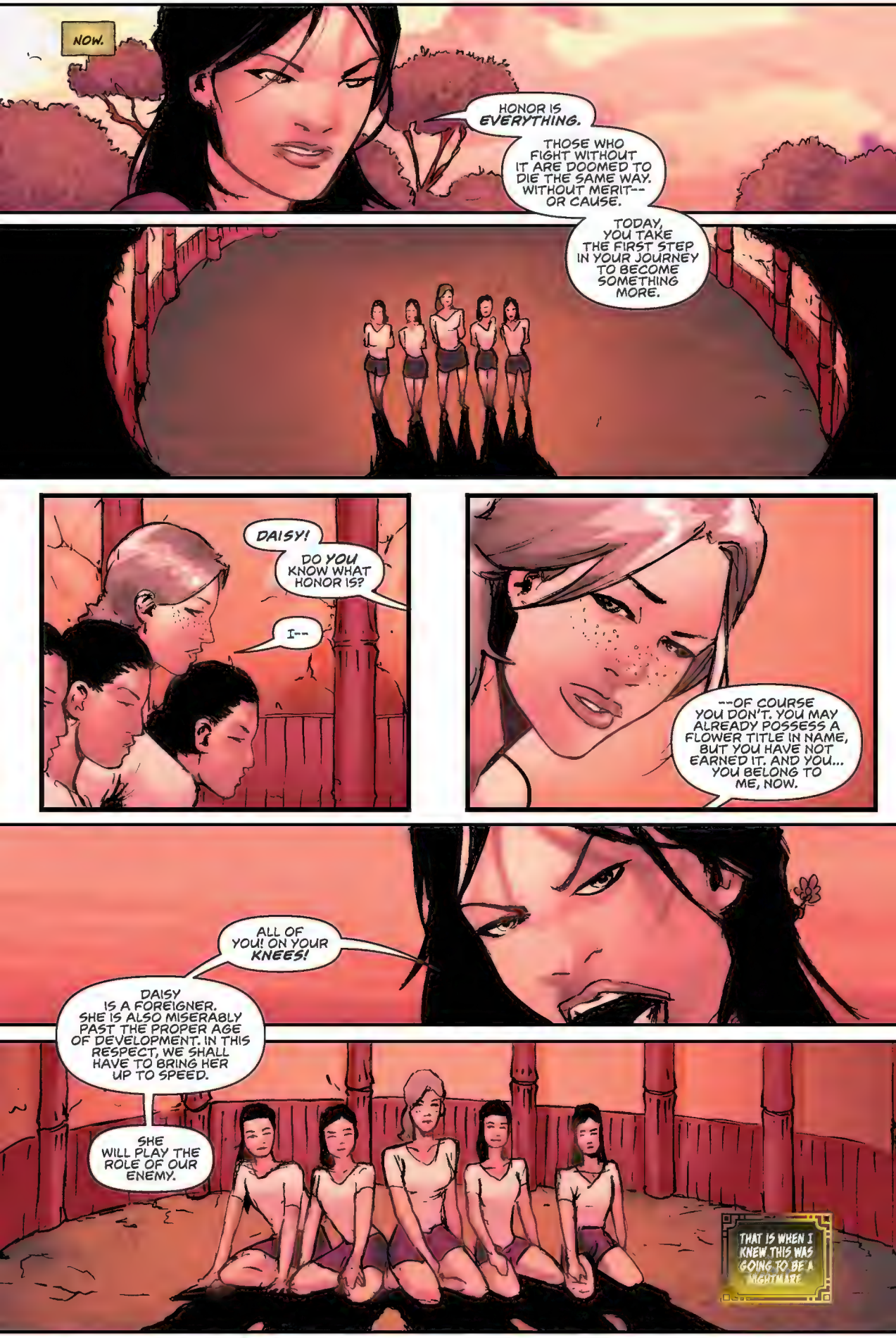
ONE MONTH AGO.
YOU MADE A CALL TO US, SAID YOU HAD INFORMATION.
YOU WOULD BETRAY YOUR ALLIES SO EASILY?
-:COUGH COUGH:-
THE SAD TRUTH IS I DIDN'T NEED TO BEAT YOU WITHIN AN INCH OF YOUR LIFE-- I ALREADY KNOW WHERE THEY WENT. SHEN HAS ALWAYS BEEN NOTHING IF NOT PREDICTABLE.
I TOO, AM FAIRLY PREDICTABLE.
I HAVE MY WAYS. MANY OF MY PEERS PREFER TO USE THE SWORD. TO SLICE OFF A MAN'S LIMBS WITH ONE BLOW IS SAID TO BE HONORABLE.
NNNGH... PLEASE!
I AM NO MAN OF HONOR.
MY PREFERENCE IS TO TAKE MY TIME. PRECISION IS OF NO IMPORTANCE TO ME.
NOO--
AFTER ALL-- I ALWAYS SAY...
GAGGG!
...HONOR IS FOR THOSE DESTINED TO FAIL.


NOW.
HONOR IS EVERYTHING.
THOSE WHO FIGHT WITHOUT IT ARE DOOMED TO DIE THE SAME WAY. WITHOUT MERIT-- OR CAUSE.
TODAY, YOU TAKE THE FIRST STEP IN YOUR JOURNEY TO BECOME SOMETHING MORE.
DAISY!
DO YOU KNOW WHAT HONOR IS?
I--
--OF COURSE YOU DON'T. YOU MAY ALREADY POSSESS A FLOWER TITLE IN NAME, BUT YOU HAVE NOT EARNED IT. AND YOU... YOU BELONG TO ME, NOW.
ALL OF YOU! ON YOUR KNEES!
DAISY IS A FOREIGNER. SHE IS ALSO MISERABLY PAST THE PROPER AGE OF DEVELOPMENT. IN THIS RESPECT, WE SHALL HAVE TO BRING HER UP TO SPEED.
SHE WILL PLAY THE ROLE OF OUR ENEMY.
THAT IS WHEN I KNEW THIS WAS GOING TO BE A NIGHTMARE

I'M USED TO BEING DRAGGED THROUGH THE MUD. IT'S ACTUALLY NOTHING NEW FOR ME. BEEN THAT WAY MY WHOLE LIFE. BUT, NOT LITERALLY.
NERINE COULD NOT HIDE HER DISAPPOINTMENT IN ME
NOW!
AGAIN!
THUNK
AGAIN!
AGAIN!
OR HER ENTHUSIASM

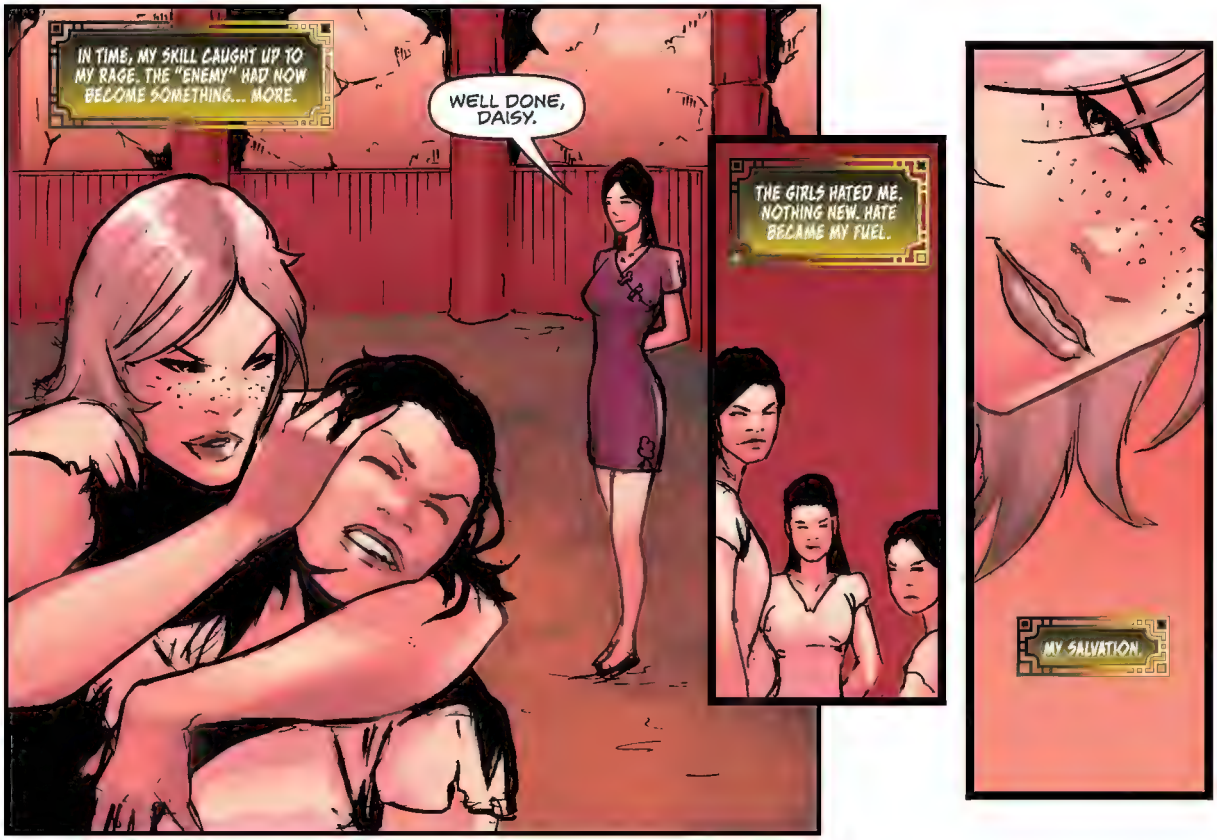
THEY BROKE ME
THE FEELING WAS ODDLY FAMILIAR.
THE NIGHTS WERE THE WORST. THEY ALWAYS HAVE BEEN.
MY OWN THOUGHTS ALWAYS FRIGHTENING ME MORE THAN ANY PAIN I COULD ENDURE
IN MY WAKING HOURS

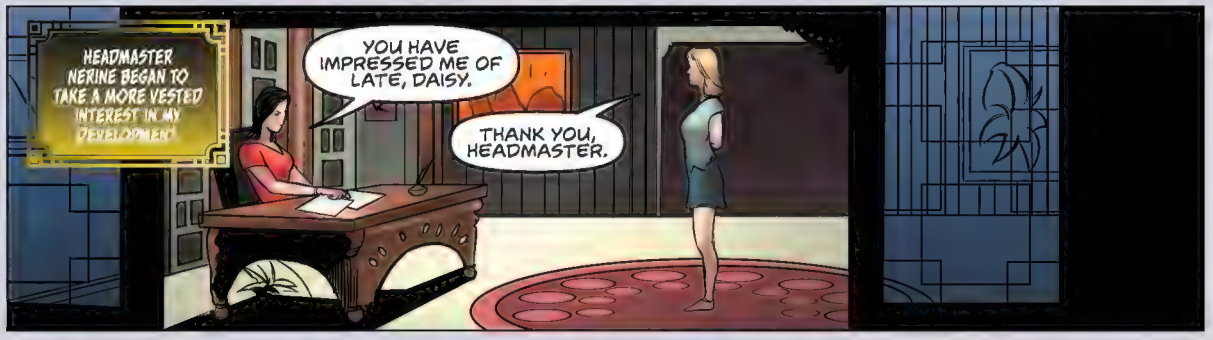
...FRIGHTENED
ME IN WAYS I CANNOT
DESCRIBE

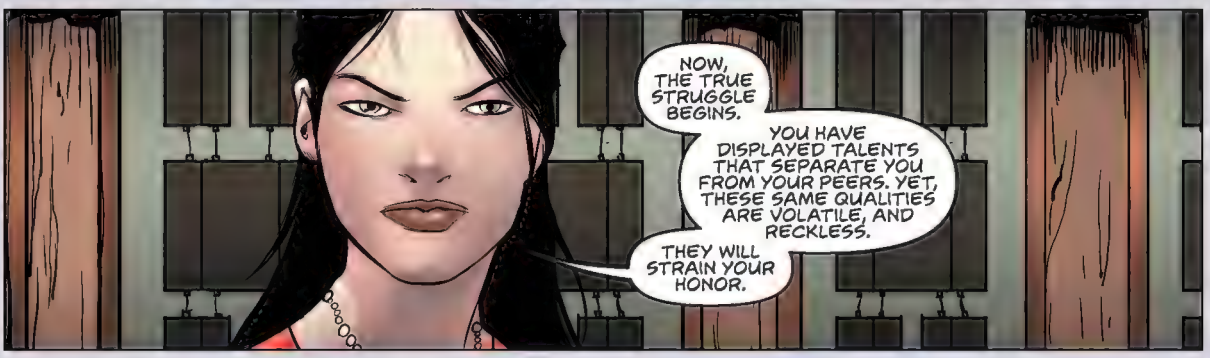
I KEPT TO MYSELF. HOWEVER, AS MASTER NERINE TAUGHT ME, WE ARE OFTEN TESTED MOST WHEN UNPREPARED FOR BATTLE.
HAHAHAHAHA!
YET, THIS TIME, I WAS PREPARED
THIS TIME, I HAD ENOUGH.
HRAAAA!
DO NOT DO SOMETHING YOU WILL REGRET, YOU AMERICAN BITCH--

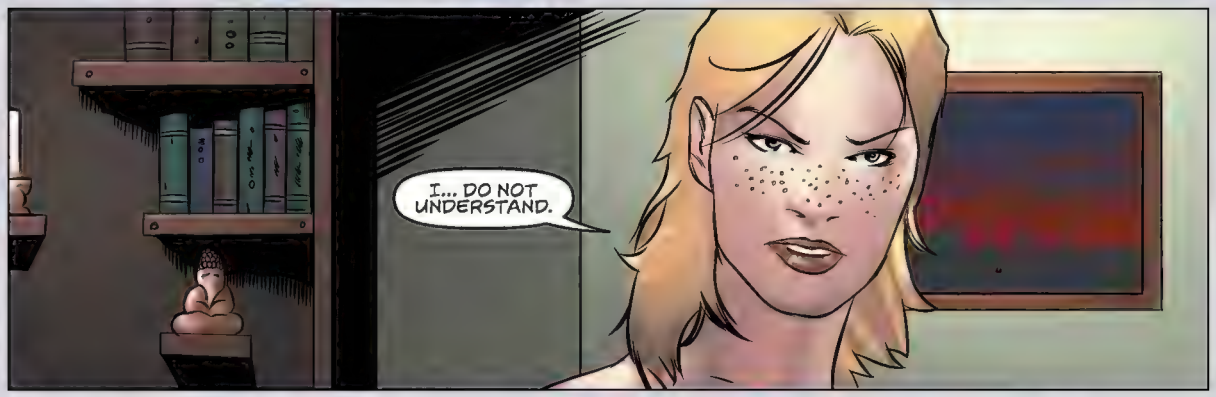
I LEARNED MY FIRST VALUABLE LESSON THAT DAY.
PASSION CAN YIELD RESULTS.
I DIDN'T HAVE TO HIDE WHO I TRULY WAS.
ANYONE ELSE?
TAKE HER TO THE HOLE!
I COULD USE IT TO MY ADVANTAGE.
THAT IS WHEN MY ASCENT BEGAN.
...IN THE DARKNESS BELOW.

WEEKS LATER.
I STILL LACKED THE PROPER DISCIPLINE WHEN CONFRONTED WITH DANGER...
...BUT, I MADE UP FOR IT IN OTHER WAYS. BY CHANNELING MY DARKEST THOUGHTS INTO MY ACTIONS-- I WAS UNSTOPPABLE.
I WAS AT... PEACE.

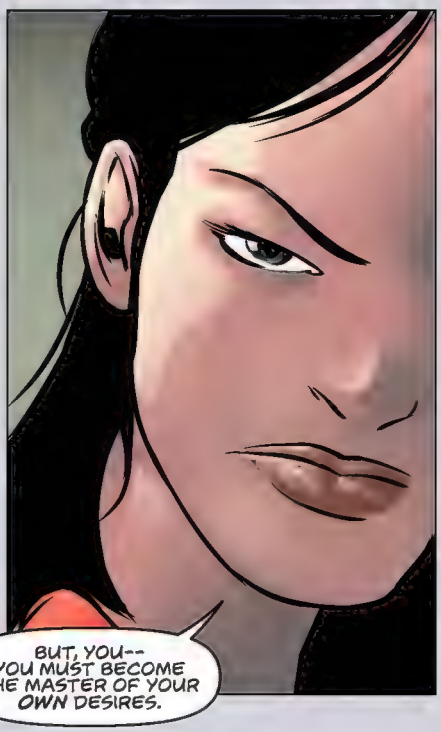

IN TIME, MY SKILL CAUGHT UP TO MY RAGE. THE "ENEMY" HAD NOW BECOME SOMETHING... MORE.
WELL DONE, DAISY.
THE GIRLS HATED ME. NOTHING NEW. HATE BECAME MY FUEL.
MY SALVATION.

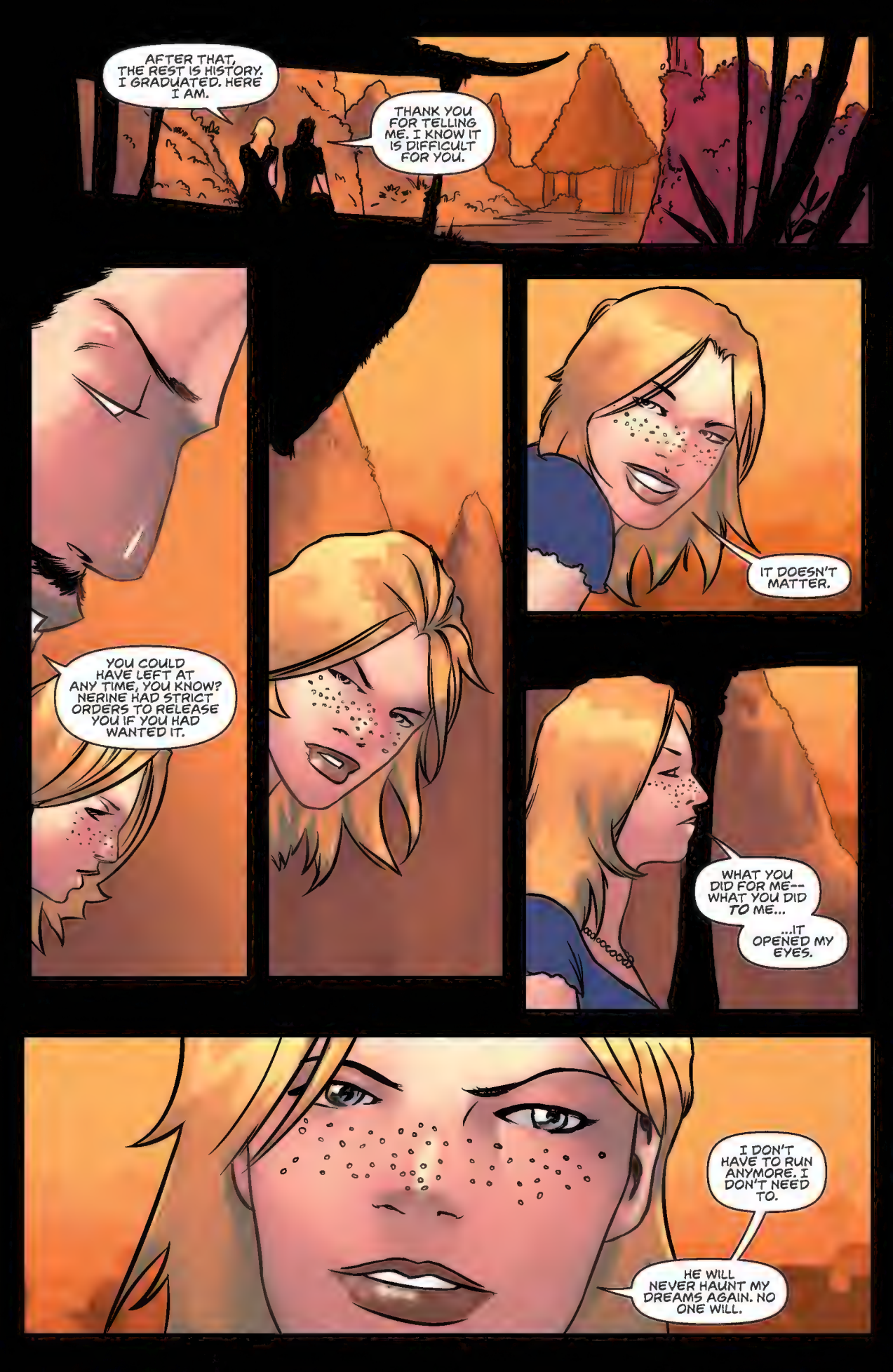

HEADMASTER NERINE BEGAN TO TAKE A MORE VESTED INTEREST IN MY DEVELOPMENT.
YOU HAVE IMPRESSED ME OF LATE, DAISY.
THANK YOU, HEADMASTER.


NOW, THE TRUE STRUGGLE BEGINS.
YOU HAVE DISPLAYED TALENTS THAT SEPARATE YOU FROM YOUR PEERS. YET, THESE SAME QUALITIES ARE VOLATILE, AND RECKLESS.
THEY WILL STRAIN YOUR HONOR.


I... DO NOT UNDERSTAND.

DAISY... AN EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT IS MORE THAN SIMPLY EMOTION. IT IS A PRIVILEGE, A SYMBOL OF YOUR GROWTH. YOUR TRUE BLOOM IS A TESTAMENT TO YOUR ABILITY TO MASTER ANY SITUATION.
YOUR LOVER SHEN-- HE UNDERSTANDS THIS. IT'S WHY HE BROUGHT YOU HERE. TO CONTROL YOUR EMOTIONS. TO BECOME SOMETHING MORE.


BUT, YOU-- YOU MUST BECOME THE MASTER OF YOUR OWN DESIRES.


AFTER THAT, THE REST IS HISTORY. I GRADUATED. HERE I AM.
THANK YOU FOR TELLING ME. I KNOW IT IS DIFFICULT FOR YOU.
YOU COULD HAVE LEFT AT ANY TIME, YOU KNOW? NERINE HAD STRICT ORDERS TO RELEASE YOU IF YOU HAD WANTED IT.
IT DOESN'T MATTER.
WHAT YOU DID FOR ME-- WHAT YOU DID TO ME...
...IT OPENED MY EYES.
I DON'T HAVE TO RUN ANYMORE. I DON'T NEED TO.
HE WILL NEVER HAUNT MY DREAMS AGAIN. NO ONE WILL.

SOMETIME LATER.
I HOPE YOU ARE PREPARED STUDENTS. TODAY WILL BE A CHALLENGING--
HNNN...
YES--

--I AM READY FOR THE CHALLENGE, HEADMASTER.
THEY WERE... JUST GIRLS.
INDEED. YET, AM I THE ONE RESPONSIBLE FOR PLACING THEM IN HARM'S WAY? AM I THE ONE WHO ROBBED THEM OF THEIR FREEDOM TO CHOOSE TO DIE BY THEIR OWN CHOICE?
THEY WERE NOT SLAVES!
YET, THEY DIED AS SO? DID THEY NOT?
YOU MAY JUDGE ME IMMORAL. MANY HAVE. BUT, I BALK AT YOUR SILLY FACADE OF WHAT YOU DEEM AS PRINCIPLES.
NOW YOU WILL *DIE* FOR YOURS.
...WHY?
YOU KNOW WHY. YOU TOOK HER IN. YOU ALLOWED HER TO BLOOM. A FOOLISH DECISION. BUT, SHE IS NOT YOURS, OR SHEN'S PROPERTY. SHE IS SPOKEN FOR.
AS ARE YOU...

HRAAAH!
NNNGHH!
AHHHHH!
SUCH A PRETTY FACE! IT'LL BE A SHAME TO RUIN IT!
SHUNK
GAAAHHH!

I THOUGHT YOU PREACHED "HONOR?"
KRAK
UNNGHH!
NOT FOR YOU!
THUNK
YOU ARE NO DIFFERENT THAN ANY MAN! YOU REQUIRE OXYGEN!
AND YOU... HNNG... ARE NO DIFFERENT THAN ANY WOMAN--
SMASH

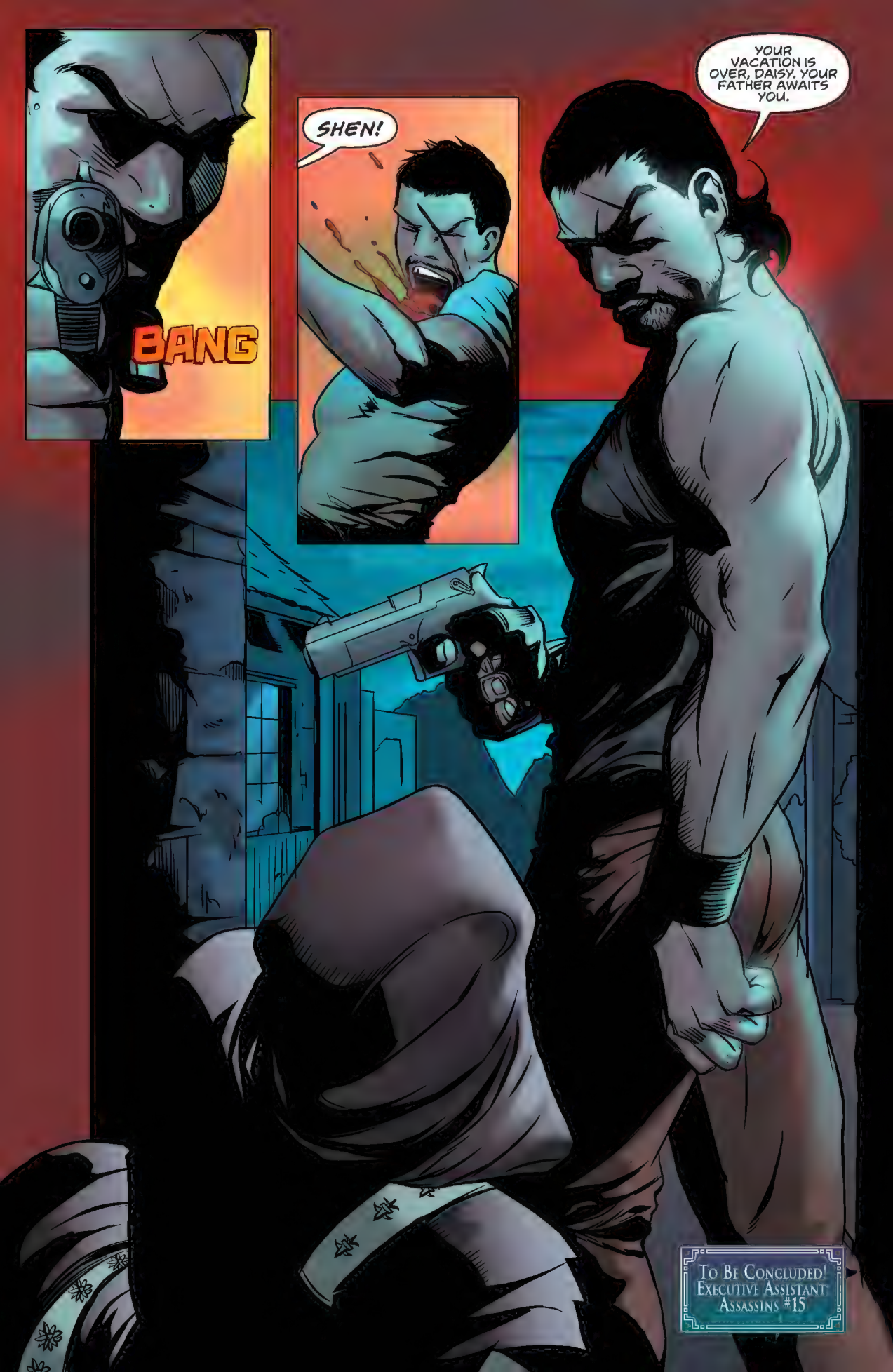
YOU THOUGHT YOUR TRAINING WOULD ASSIST YOU...
...BUT, THIS IS THE REAL WORLD--
KRAK
KRUSH
--KNOWLEDGE MEANS NOTHING.

BAISHUTAI MARKET.
I REGRET YOUR AGGRESSIVE STANCE IN NEGOTIATING WITH ME YI, I DID NOT COME LOOKING FOR HOSTILITIES. I WANTED TO DISCUSS WAYS TO WORK IN PARALLEL. AMICABLY.
YOU SHOULD REGRET YOUR ENTIRE PRESENCE HERE, SHEN, THE CITY NO LONGER ANSWERS TO YOUR CORRUPTION.
AND NOW THEY ANSWER TO YOURS?
THEY ANSWER TO THEIR BANK ACCOUNTS.
YOU SHOULD KNOW THIS BETTER THAN ANYONE.
TAKE HIM.
YES, PLEASE DO.

HRAA!
YOU SHOULD LEARN TO PROTECT YOUR REAR.
HNNH?
HNNNNNH!
SUNK
IT JUST COST YOUR LIFE.

YOU LOSE FOCUS EASILY, AMATEURS.
SHIIIING
YAAA!
THIS LAND BELONGS TO SHEN. IT ALWAYS HAS. IT IS OURS NOW... UNDERSTOOD?
YOU CAN'T SPEAK. YOUR THROAT MUSCLES ARE CONTRACTING IN COMPENSATION. SO I'LL TAKE THAT AS A YES.
DAISY!
BEHIND YOU!

YOU FOOLS.
FWACK
ALL THIS CONFLICT AND NONE OF YOU EVER THINK TO BRING A MODERN WEAPON?
WHO..?
BANG
$HIT--


BANG
SHEN!
YOUR VACATION IS OVER, DAISY. YOUR FATHER AWAITS YOU.
To Be Concluded!
Executive Assistant: Assassins #15

ASPEN

EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT ASSASSINS

Vince HERNANDEZ
Lori HANSON
Teodoro GONZALEZ
Josh REED

BLOCKADE ENTERTAINMENT

#15

COVER A

CELEBRATING THE FIRST DECADE OF ASPEN COMICS!

ASPEN

EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT ASSASSINS

Vince HERNANDEZ
Lori HANSON
Teodoro GONZALEZ
Josh REED

BLOCKADE ENTERTAINMENT

#15
COVER B

The story so far

The struggle to become something more with in the confines of the Executive Assistant Academy nearly ended Daisy's life both literally and figuratively. However her determination to transform herself led her to discover an inner strength and anger she never knew she possessed. But it wasn't enough to deter the armed assailant sent by her father Franklin as he caught Daisy off guard and shot her four times in the process.

Executive Assistant: Assassins

[DAISY]

PART 4 OF 4

WRITTEN BY
VINCE HERNANDEZ

PENCILS BY
LORI "CROSS" HANSON

INKS BY
TEODORO GONZALEZ

LETTERING
JOSH REED

A: Direct Edition
Lori Hanson
Teodoro Gonzalez

B: Direct Edition
Pasquale Qualano
Teodoro Gonzalez

C: Retailer Incentive "Assassin" Edition
Elizabeth Torque
Nei Ruffino

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Lettering & Logo Design by: Dreamer Design

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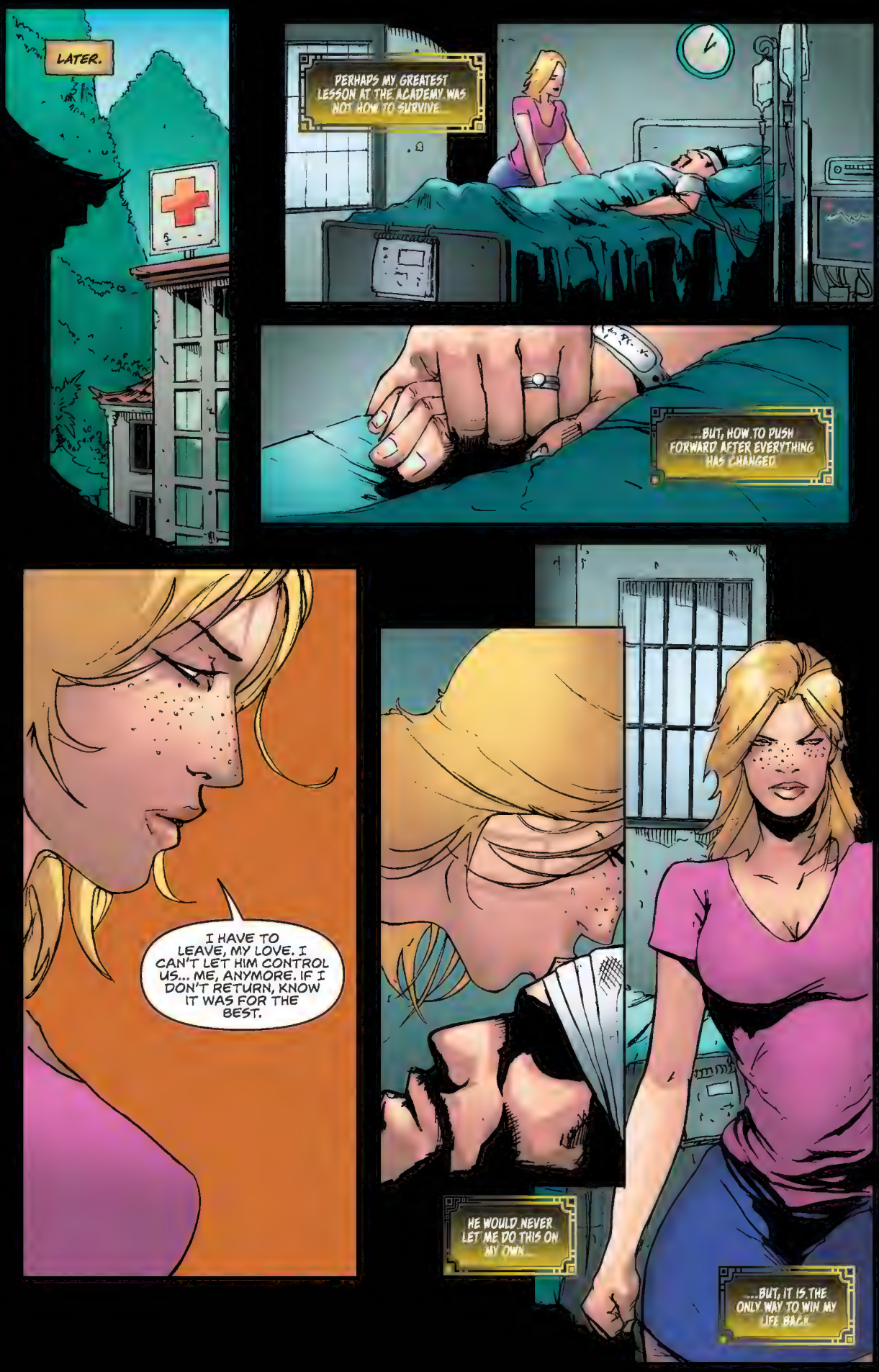
YOU AMUSE ME, SO I WILL GIVE YOU TWO OPTIONS. COME WITH ME AND I WILL RETURN YOU TO YOUR FATHER UNHARMED. OR, I WILL KILL YOUR LOVER AND STILL BRING YOU BACK-- UNCONSCIOUS.
JUST ASK YOUR HEADMASTER, ALTHOUGH SHE IS UNLIKELY TO RESPOND.
SHE... SHE DID NOTHING TO YOU! SCREW YOU AND MY FATHER! I'D RATHER DIE THAN GIVE HIM THE SATISFACTION.
I WON'T LIE--
--I HOPED FOR THAT RESPONSE.
CHK-CHAK
GET... NNGGH... AWAY FROM HER!
AH, YOUR LOVER IS BRAVE, BUT NOT VERY WISE.
LEAVE HIM BE!
SHNNK

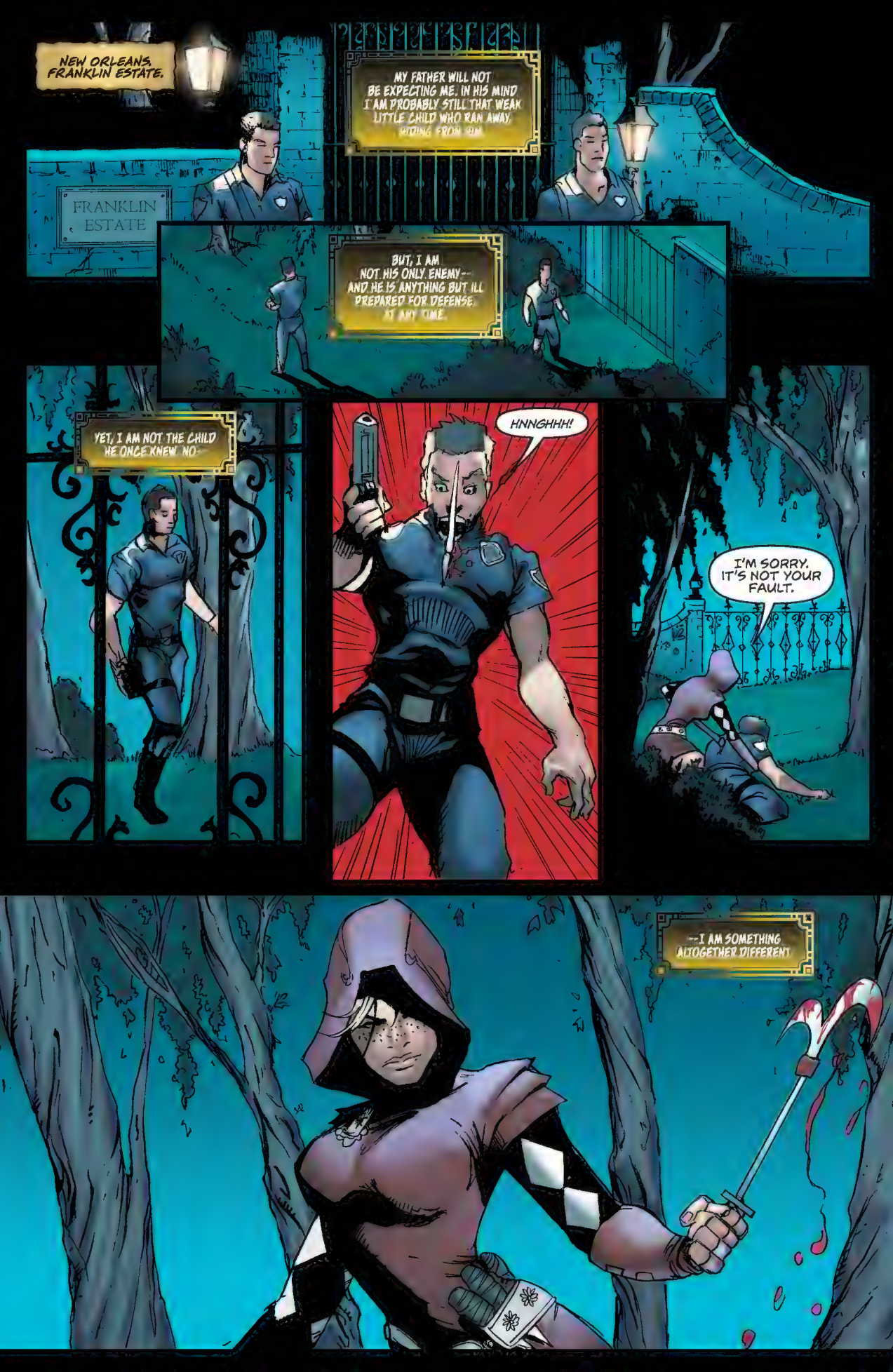
HE HAS HEART, I'LL GIVE HIM THA--
A MOMENT OF DISTRACTION CAN LAST A LIFETIME
WHUNK
THAT IS WHAT NERINE TAUGHT ME AT THE ACADEMY. TURN A MOMENT INTO AN OPPORTUNITY
NICE TRY--
THUNK
--BUT YOU... NNGGHH... ARE JUST A WOMAN! YOU THINK I NEED A WEAPON TO KILL YOU!
-:CHOKE!:-
THIS MOMENT IS LASTING LONGER THAN EXPECTED
MY MIND IS DARKENING-- I NEED THE UPPER HAND
OR BETTER YET-- I NEED TO USE ONE OF THEM

SHLUNK
AHHHHHHHHH!!!
MY EYE!!!
WHAT--
--THIS ONE?
YOU ARE DEAD!!
YOU FIRST.

SHHHLIIIK

HE WILL NEVER OWN ME AGAIN, DO YOU UNDERSTAND?!
NEVER!
NEVER!
DAISY...
THUNK
DAISY-- ENOUGH!
DAISY, PLEASE.
NO!
SHEN!
I WAS OUT OF CONTROL. IT WAS THEN THAT I KNEW WHAT HAD TO BE DONE.


LATER.
PERHAPS MY GREATEST LESSON AT THE ACADEMY WAS NOT HOW TO SURVIVE...
...BUT, HOW TO PUSH FORWARD AFTER EVERYTHING HAS CHANGED.
I HAVE TO LEAVE, MY LOVE. I CAN'T LET HIM CONTROL US... ME, ANYMORE. IF I DON'T RETURN, KNOW IT WAS FOR THE BEST.
HE WOULD NEVER LET ME DO THIS ON MY OWN...
...BUT, IT IS THE ONLY WAY TO WIN MY LIFE BACK.


NEW ORLEANS. FRANKLIN ESTATE.
MY FATHER WILL NOT BE EXPECTING ME. IN HIS MIND I AM PROBABLY STILL THAT WEAK LITTLE CHILD WHO RAN AWAY, HIDING FROM HIM.
FRANKLIN ESTATE
BUT, I AM NOT HIS ONLY ENEMY-- AND HE IS ANYTHING BUT ILL PREPARED FOR DEFENSE, AT ANY TIME.
YET, I AM NOT THE CHILD HE ONCE KNEW. NO-
HNNGHHH!
I'M SORRY. IT'S NOT YOUR FAULT.
--I AM SOMETHING ALTOGETHER DIFFERENT.

STEVENSON, WHERE'D YA RUN OFF TO?
CRUNCH
STEVENSON! QUIT F#@KING AROUND.
STEVENSON IS NOT "F#@KING AROUND". HE'S F#@KING DEAD.
AND SO ARE YOU...
UNNNGGHHH!
...UNFORTUNATELY.

MR. FRANKLIN, SIR...
...IT LOOKS LIKE OUR OUTSOURCED CLIENT... HAS BEEN *REMOVED* FROM THE EQUATION.
-SIGH-
HOW DIFFICULT MUST IT BE TO RETRIEVE ONE HELPLESS GIRL?
STEVENSON? MARKS? YOU GUYS THERE? WHAT'S WITH THE RADIO SILENCE?
THERE'S MORE, SIR. MY OTHER SOURCES TELL ME SHE HAS LEFT CHINA. HER WHEREABOUTS ARE... UNKNOWN.
UP HERE.
WHAT--?!
BRAKA
BRAKA
BRAKA

IS THAT... GUNFIRE?
WHO WOULD DARE?
YES, OF COURSE.
I KNOW EXACTLY WHO WOULD.
ARE YOU ARMED?
GIVE IT HERE.
I ADVISE YOU TAKE YOUR LEAVE, PARSONS. FOR YOUR OWN PROTECTION.
BUT, SIR, I CAN STAY AND HELP--
--I SAID GET OUT! THIS IS PERSONAL.
OF COURSE, SIR.

SHHLUNK
AIIIEEEE!
PARSONS!
HE'S DEAD.
DON'T FEIGN PITY. YOU KNOW YOU COULD CARE LESS. YOU NEVER DID CARE ABOUT ANYONE OTHER THAN YOURSELF...
...FATHER.
I KNEW YOU WOULD COME BACK, DAISY.
OF COURSE I WOULD. I AM YOUR POSSESSION, RIGHT? YOU OWN ME, *RIGHT?* YOU WOULD NEVER ALLOW SHEN AND I TO LIVE IN PEACE.
IS THAT THE BOY'S NAME? SHEN? YOU DISGUST ME.
DON'T WORRY, I AGREE WITH YOU NOW. IT'S THE TRUTH. YOU *HAVE* ALWAYS OWNED ME--

--AND ALL THAT COMES WITH IT!

YOU THINK--

CRACK

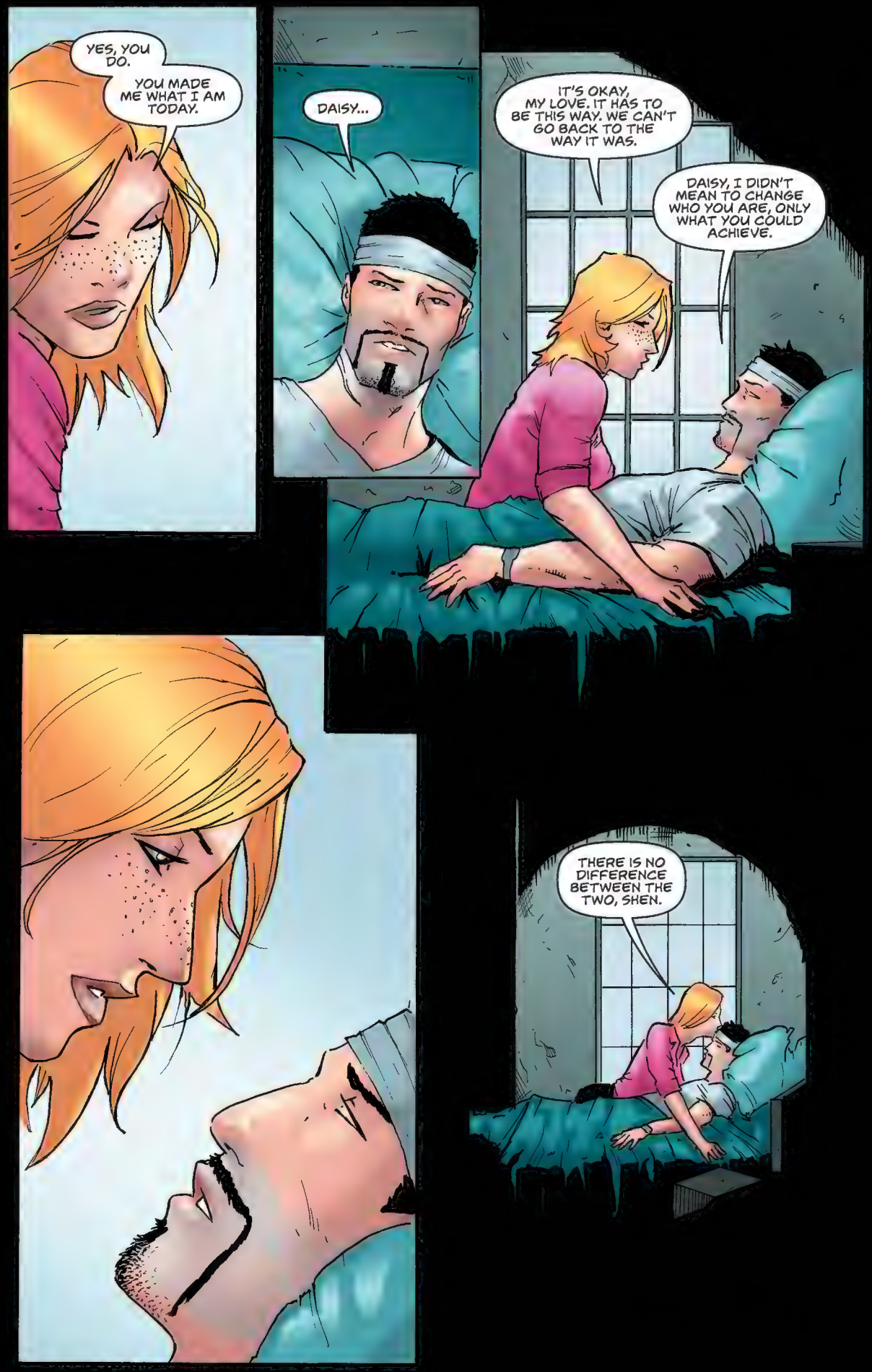
--YOU THINK YOU CAN RETURN HOME IN SOME SILLY OUTFIT WITH THAT JUNGLE KNIFE AND BLAME ME FOR THE PITIFUL EXCUSE YOU CALL A LIFE?!

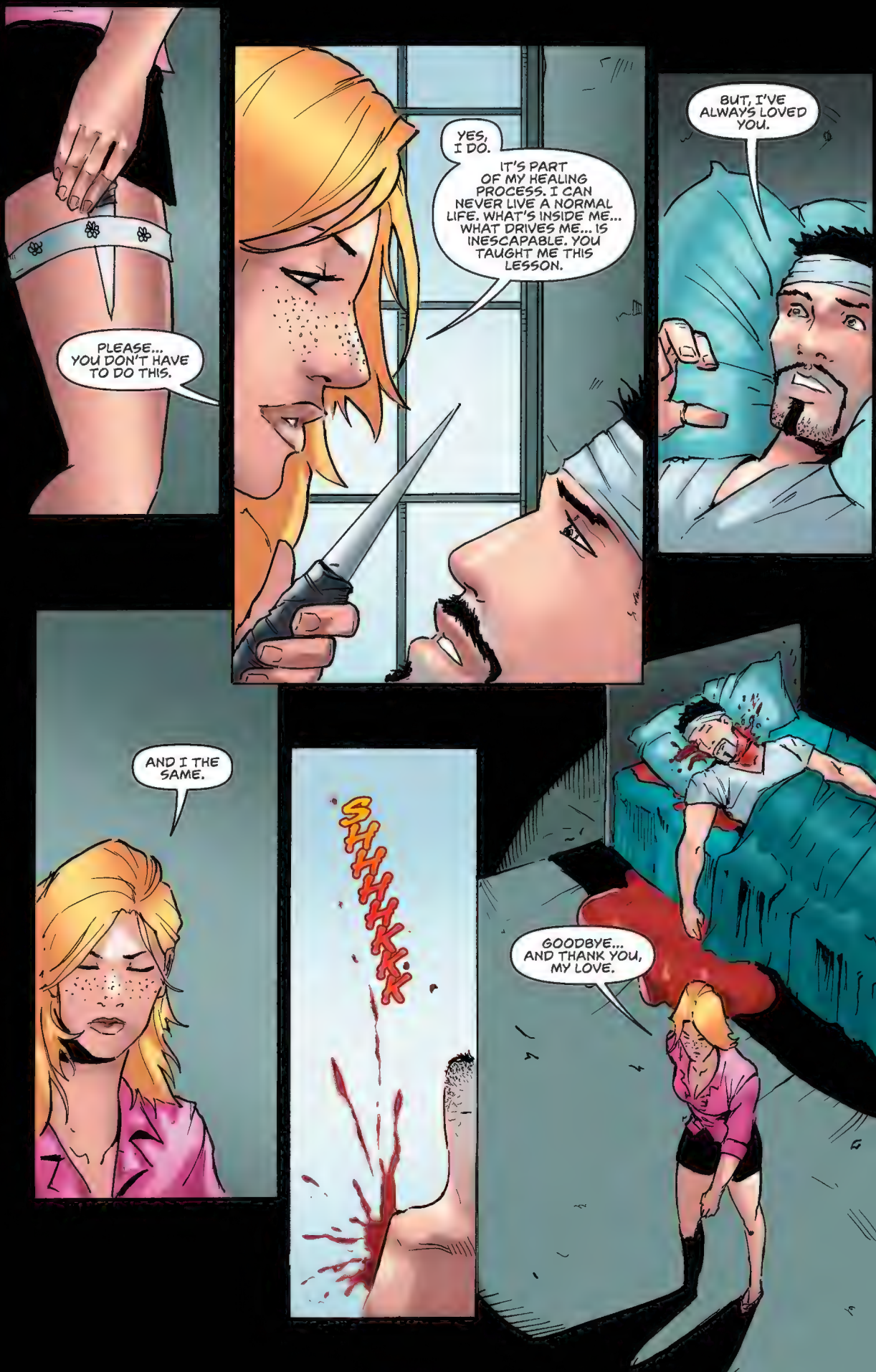
YOU LOVE PLAYING THE VICTIM, HOPING FOR SOMEONE TO SAVE YOU. I TRIED TO TEACH YOU TO GROW UP! NOT TO RUN AWAY AT THE SLIGHTEST PROBLEM. TO BE SOMEONE!

FOR THE LONGEST TIME, I THOUGHT YOU WERE WRONG. BUT, I HAVE REALIZED NOW THAT YOU WERE RIGHT, FATHER...
...I WAS THE VICTIM. I DIDN'T KNOW WHAT I WANTED. WHAT I COULD BE. NOW, HOWEVER, I KNOW WHAT I WANT. OR RATHER, WHAT I ENJOY.
DAISY!
UNGH!
WHAT... ARE YOU--
--AHH!
I'M CLEANSING MYSELF FATHER. ALL THIS TIME, YOU TOLD EVERYONE THAT I WAS THE PROBLEM, NOT YOU. THAT I WAS CRAZY. AND THE TRUTH IS...
...I *AM.*
AND I *LIKE* IT.

SHHLUNK
...
AFTER DREAMING OF THIS MOMENT FOR SO LONG, THE HAPPINESS I THOUGHT WOULD COME NEVER DID
...I'M NOT SURE WHAT TO DO NEXT

...BUT, I KNOW WHAT I HAVE TO DO.
SHEN.
HEY, YOU...
...I THOUGHT I'D LOST YOU.
I WILL ALWAYS BE YOURS, SHEN, YOU KNOW THAT. HOW IS THE PAIN?
BEARABLE, ALTHOUGH I CAN'T MOVE MUCH. THE PAIN MEDS HAVE SOFTENED MY SENSES AND THE GUNSHOT TOOK CARE OF THE REST. WHEN I WOKE UP, AND YOU WERE GONE, I THOUGHT... I GUESS I THOUGHT I PUSHED YOU TOO HARD. I THOUGHT IT WAS ALL OVER.
SHEN... AT THE ACADEMY... I... DISCOVERED A SIDE OF ME I WAS AFRAID TO CONFRONT, BUT ALWAYS KNEW EXISTED BENEATH THE SURFACE.
WHAT DO YOU MEAN?
I MEAN... I AM NOT THE PERSON YOU FELL IN LOVE WITH...
...I AM SOMETHING *DIFFERENT* ALTOGETHER.
I DON'T... I DON'T UNDERSTAND.


YES, YOU DO.
YOU MADE ME WHAT I AM TODAY.
DAISY...
IT'S OKAY, MY LOVE. IT HAS TO BE THIS WAY. WE CAN'T GO BACK TO THE WAY IT WAS.
DAISY, I DIDN'T MEAN TO CHANGE WHO YOU ARE, ONLY WHAT YOU COULD ACHIEVE.
THERE IS NO DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE TWO, SHEN.


PLEASE... YOU DON'T HAVE TO DO THIS.
YES, I DO.
IT'S PART OF MY HEALING PROCESS. I CAN NEVER LIVE A NORMAL LIFE. WHAT'S INSIDE ME... WHAT DRIVES ME... IS INESCAPABLE. YOU TAUGHT ME THIS LESSON.
BUT, I'VE ALWAYS LOVED YOU.
AND I THE SAME.
SHHHHKKK
GOODBYE... AND THANK YOU, MY LOVE.

FRENCH QUARTER.
BAR &
I LIVE FOR THIS FEELING.
YOU BLEED MORE THAN MY USUALS.
MMM.
...THE FEAR. THE FINITE FEELING OF DEATH-- IT IS MY ONLY SOLACE.
MY FATHER THOUGHT I WAS CRAZY. HE WAS RIGHT. MY LOVER THOUGHT I COULD BE MORE. HE TOO, WAS CORRECT.
I DON'T MIND.
...ALL I'VE EVER KNOWN IS PAIN, AND SUFFERING.
...IT'S WHO I AM.

...AND YOU CAN'T CHANGE WHAT YOU TRULY ARE INSIDE
END

CELEBRATING THE FIRST DECADE OF ASPEN COMICS!
ASPEN
EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT
ASSASSINS
HERNANDEZ
ERCEK
GONZALEZ
REED
BLOCKADE
ENTERTAINMENT
#16
COVER A

CEL[illegible] FIRST DECADE OF ASPEN COMICS!

ASPEN

EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT ASSASSINS

Vince HERNANDEZ
John ERCEK
Teodoro GONZALEZ
Josh REED

BLOCKADE ENTERTAINMENT

#16

COVER B

The story so far...

They are raised from their youth with strict obedience and brutally trained to protect and serve their respective masters with discipline, loyalty and often times violence, if necessary. They are the Executive Assistants.

EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT: ASSASSINS

BLOOD ORIGINS

PART 1 OF 3

VINCE HERNANDEZ

JORDAN GUNDERSON

DIGITAL INKS

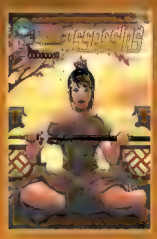
JOHN ERCEK, CHARLIE MOK

COLORS

TEODORO GONZALEZ

LETTERS

JOSH REED



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EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT: ASSASSINS™ Vol. 1 Issue 16

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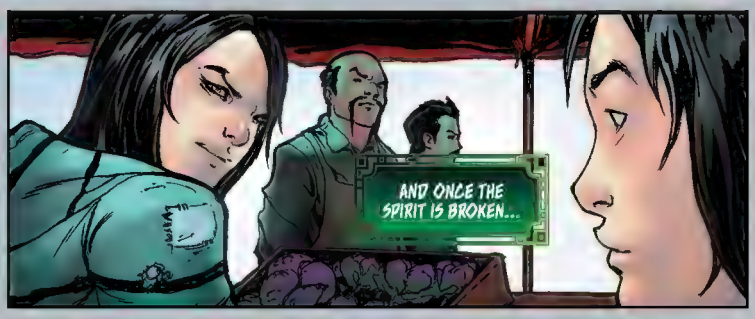
QINGHAI, CHINA.
1965
I ARRIVED IN CHINA BY WAY OF MY FATHER'S EXILED PAST.
HE WAS A FEEBLE MAN, FOOLISH OF HEART. BUT, IT WAS HIS HEART THAT KEPT US ALIVE MY EARLY YEARS.
WE MADE OUR WAY FROM JAPAN THROUGH NORTH KOREA, EVENTUALLY ENDING UP IN A LARGE PROVINCE ON THE QINGHAI-TIBET PLATEAU.

YET, WE WERE IN NO STRENGTH TO CONTINUE.


AND ONCE THE SPIRIT IS BROKEN...

...INSTINCTS BEGIN TO EMERGE.

...MY SISTER, MAYU, SHE TAUGHT ME THIS VALUABLE LESSON...
...SURVIVAL IS NOT A CRIME...
TAKE THIS, HANA.

...I WILL ALWAYS BE IN DEBT TO HER FOR THIS.

13 YEARS LATER.
BUT, WHAT YOU MUST REMEMBER FROM MY SISTER AND I'S STRUGGLE-- IS THAT YOUR INSTINCT WILL ALWAYS KICK IN. DO NOT FIGHT IT. LET IT DICTATE YOUR CHOICES.*
*TRANSLATED FROM MANDARIN.
SHE WILL TRY TO USE HER SIZE TO GAIN THE ADVANTAGE ON YOU. THEIR FORCE IS OUR GAIN. EVADE AND PULL HER IN-- DO YOU HEAR ME?
DONE.
GOOD. NOW DO ME PROUD.
IS THAT A SMILE I SEE ON YOUR FACE?
IT IS PRIDE. SHE DESERVES THIS VICTORY. SHE HAS WORKED HARD.
YOU BOTH HAVE. YOU WORK TOO HARD, HANA.
THE CHOICE IS NOT MINE. I DON'T HAVE A FANCY JOB TITLE LIKE YOURSELF...
...SOME OF US HAVE TO GET OUR HANDS DIRTY IN ORDER TO PAY THE BILLS.

HEY-- I WAS THE ONE FORCED TO DO THE LAUNDRY BY YOU TWO, DON'T ACT LIKE YOU FORGOT?
HA! IT WAS TRULY UNFORGETTABLE. LIKE YOURSELF.
SO, LI, WHAT HAS TAKEN YOU OUT OF THE AIR-CONDITIONED BOARDROOM AND INTO MY HOT AND SWEATY GYM ON THIS FINE AFTERNOON?
I NEED... HELP.
HOW SO?
IT'S... COMPLICATED.
MY BUSINESS HAS EMERGED AS A POWERHOUSE IN THE MARKET, RECENTLY. WE'VE MADE SUBSTANTIAL GAINS. AND... THERE ARE THOSE WHO WOULD RATHER STUNT OUR GROWTH, IF YOU FOLLOW.
NOT ENTIRELY.
IT'S MY COMPETITORS. THEY.. SEEK TO END MY SUCCESS, BY ANY MEANS NECESSARY.. INCLUDING MY LIFE.
WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT? I THOUGHT YOU WORKED IN PHARMACEUTICALS? *WHY* WOULD YOUR LIFE BE IN DANGER?
HANA--
--DON'T DOWNPLAY IT! IF YOU'RE IN DANGER--

--I'M NOT DOWNPLAYING IT, I PROMISE. IT'S WHY I'M HERE.
WALK WITH ME.
I KNOW WHAT I DO SEEMS RATHER... MUNDANE TO YOU, BUT THERE ARE CERTAIN CONSEQUENCES IN MY FIELD ONCE YOU ACHIEVE SUCCESS BEYOND YOUR MEANS.
IT MAKES PERFECT SENSE, ONCE YOU DISCOVER THAT SUCCESS IN MY LINE OF WORK IS DRIVEN BY POWER, AND THE NEED TO CONTROL.
THAT MAKES NO SENSE.
WHY ARE YOU TELLING ME THIS?
BECAUSE... I NEED YOU.
WHAT DO YOU MEAN?
I NEED PROTECTION.
MORE-SO I NEED SOMEONE I CAN TRUST. YOU CAN OFFER BOTH.
BELIEVE ME, I WOULDN'T BE ASKING IF YOU WEREN'T THE LAST PERSON I CAN CALL UPON.
LI-- GET SERIOUS. I'M A FIGHTER NOT A BODYGUARD.
I DON'T SEE MUCH DIFFERENCE ONCE YOU GET DOWN TO THE BASICS OF BOTH.
YEAH, BUT STILL. WHAT DO YOU EXPECT ME TO DO? BEAT UP YOUR COLLEAGUES IF THEY GET TOO CROSS WITH YOU?
WOULD THAT BE SO BAD? YOU KNOW YOU WOULD ENJOY IT.
THAT'S NOT THE POINT.

LI... YOU KNOW I THINK OF YOU AS A BROTHER...
...BUT, WHAT YOU ASK... THAT'S NOT ME.
I HAD A FEELING YOU'D SAY THAT.
YET, YOU ASKED ANYWAY?
OF COURSE. YOU ARE SOMEONE I TRUST WITH MY LIFE-- AND THERE ARE VERY FEW OF THOSE.
DO NOT FRET OVER IT. IT WAS NOT RIGHT OF ME TO ASK, BUT I COULDN'T RESIST.
YOU SELDOM CAN.
IT'S WHAT GOT ME INTO TROUBLE IN THE FIRST PLACE. I'LL SEE YOU SOON. GET BACK IN THERE AND SHOW THEM WHO IS BOSS.
ALWAYS.

LATER.
LI IN TROUBLE? DID I HEAR THAT RIGHT?
IT WORRIES ME, MAYU. HE MAY HAVE A FANCY SUIT AND TIE AND HAVE DOZENS OF ASSISTANTS, BUT INSIDE, HE'S STILL THAT LITTLE BOY BY THE POND, COLLECTING TADPOLES.
YEAH, BUT REALLY-- WHAT DID HE EXPECT YOU TO DO? GO BEAT UP HIS ENEMIES FOR HIM?
NO, I THINK HE JUST WANTED SOMEONE HE CAN TRUST AROUND HIM. BELIEVE ME I KNOW WHAT'S THAT LIKE.
WE BOTH DO, DON'T FORGET.
I WOULDN'T WORRY. IN HIS LINE OF WORK I HIGHLY DOUBT THAT HE IS IN ANY REAL DANGER. PROBABLY WILL JUST GET A TIRE SLASHED ON HIS ROLLS OR SOMETHING.
SPEAKING OF OCCUPATIONAL HAZARDS--
--OH, DON'T GET STARTED ON THAT AGAIN. WE'VE DISCUSSED THIS.
YOU DID MOST OF THE TALKING.
I LOVE YOU, LITTLE SISTER, BUT WE BOTH CHOSE OUR PATHS IN LIFE.
MINE DOESN'T REQUIRE CONSTANTLY LOOKING OVER MY SHOULDER.
-SIGH-
ONE DAY SOON, YOU WILL SEE THAT WE ALL SHOULD BE LOOKING OVER OUR SHOULDER.
I'LL CALL YOU. WE'LL DO THIS AGAIN.
YEAH.

QINGHAI BUSINESS DISTRICT.
11:45 PM.
MINUS A FEW LOOPHOLES, I THINK WE'RE A GO.
THE MERGER IS ALL SET FOR THE MORNING. LI, YOU SHOULD GO HOME AND GET SOME REST. IT'S GOING TO BE A LONG DAY TOMORROW.
I'LL REST WHEN I KNOW THIS TAKEOVER IS COMPLETE.
VERY WELL. I'LL SEE YOU IN THE MORNING.
VERY WELL.
SO CLOSE... FINALLY.
THUMP
...?
WHO-- WHO'S THERE?
THAT WILL BE USELESS--

--AND TOO LATE.
PLEASE! I KNOW WHO SENT YOU. WE CAN WORK THIS OUT. I CAN OFFER YOU MORE THAN RENSHU.
I'M SURE YOU CAN.
THIP THIP
BUT, I DON'T WORK FOR RENSHU.

UNDISCLOSED LOCATION.
DOES EVERYBODY UNDERSTAND THEIR ROLES?
SECURITY.
DISTRACTION... IF NEEDED.
EXCELLENT.
EXIT STRATEGY.
AND I WILL HANDLE THE PRIZE.
HOW DO WE KNOW WE CAN TRUST YOU, MAYU?
I COULD ASK THE SAME QUESTION OF YOU, CHUN...
...BUT, I WON'T. I ASSEMBLED THIS LITTLE QUARTET TO WATCH EACH OTHER'S BACKS. THE PLAN ONLY WORKS IF WE LOOK OUT FOR EACH OTHER. TOGETHER, WE CAN TAKE DOWN BIGGER SCORES THAN WE EVER COULD SEPARATELY.
AND IT'S ALL ABOUT THE SCORE, AM I RIGHT, LADIES?

QINGHAI MORGUE.
THIS HIM?
I'M AFRAID SO.
-SIGH-
MY CONDOLENCES.
I'VE SPENT SEVERAL YEARS TEACHING YOUNG FIGHTERS HOW TO DEAL WITH PAIN, BUT THIS SHATTERED MY WORLD.
AT FIRST I THOUGHT IT MUST BE A DREAM. NO LIFE COULD CARRY SUCH UNENDING SADNESS...
...THAT FEELING QUICKLY FADED. MAYU TAUGHT ME THAT GUILT IS A HEAVY BURDEN THAT WILL ONLY DRAG ME DOWN INTO THE ABYSS.
I COULD HAVE SAVED LI, BUT I CHOSE NOT TO. IT WAS MY FAULT. I OWNED UP TO MY CHOICE. NOW, IT WAS TIME FOR SOMEONE ELSE TO OWN UP TO THEIRS.

IT TOOK AWHILE, BUT EVENTUALLY I FOUND HIS LOCATION.
RENSHU?
YOU NEED LEVEL THREE CLEARANCE.
PLEASE TELL HIM LI SENDS HIS REGARDS.
HOLD ON...
26TH FLOOR. PENTHOUSE FLOOR.
THANK YOU.
I WASN'T SURE WHAT I WAS PLANNING TO DO, BUT I KNEW SOMETHING HAD TO BE DONE...
DING
HOLD IT RIGHT THERE.
TELL ME--

HAVE YOU COME LOOKING FOR VENGEANCE?
YOU KNOW WHY I'M HERE. LI DIDN'T DESERVE TO DIE!
BUT, YOU DO? YOU MUST HAVE A DEATH WISH, COMING HERE LIKE THIS.
I DON'T CARE.
CLEARLY. YOU EXHIBIT NO LACK OF COURAGE.
GRAB HER.
KRACK
AHHHHHHHHHHHHH!

COME HERE!
SMASH
FREEZE!
THWACK
THUNK
YOU FIGHT LIKE A GIRL.
AND YOU LIKE AN AMATEUR...
...YOU MAY BE FAST, BUT YOU'RE NOT THIS QUICK. DON'T TRY ANYTHING FOR A MOMENT AND JUST LISTEN TO ME...
...BECAUSE I DID NOT KILL LI.

PEOPLE KILL FOR THIS.
ALL FOR JUST A FEW STONES.
ALMOST WISH WE COULD KEEP SOME OF THEM.
DON'T GET ANY IDEAS, I GOT DEBT TO PAY OFF, OR IT'S MY ASS.
LADIES-- WE HAVE ABOUT 30 SECONDS BEFORE THE ALARM OVERRIDE KICKS IN.
IF YOU HAVE IT ALL, LET'S GET GOING. THE COAST IS CLEAR.
WHAT A SCORE! CAN'T BELIEVE WE PULLED IT O--

--OH.
DOWN ON THE GROUND, NOW!
NICE, WORK... LIEUTENANT.
CHUN, YOU TRAITOROUS BITCH!
TRAITOROUS WOULD SUGGEST I WAS ON YOUR SIDE. THAT WAS NEVER THE CASE-- YOU WERE JUST TOO FOOLISH TO RECOGNIZE.
TAKE THEM IN FOR BOOKING, BUT BRING HER WITH US.

HAVE YOU SUFFICIENTLY CALMED DOWN? WILL YOU ALLOW ME TO SPEAK?
YOU ARE SPEAKING NOW.
→SIGH←
DO YOU KNOW HOW LI AND I FIRST MET?
DO I CARE?
WE WERE BOTH HARD-WORKING YOUNG MEN AT THE SAME UPSTART COMPANY, BOTH LOOKING FOR A CHANCE TO SHINE.
BUT, I WAS ALWAYS BETTER AT ADVANCEMENT THAN HIM. IF HE WERE ALIVE, HE WOULD VALIDATE THIS SENTIMENT.
IS THAT WHY YOU KILLED HIM? REVENGE FOR FINALLY ONE-UPPING YOU?
YOU ARE PASSIONATE, BUT YOU NEED TO LEARN TO LISTEN BETTER.
I HOLD NO ANGER IN MY HEART FOR LI. WE WERE ALLIES...

FOUR YEARS EARLIER.
"...FRIENDS.
WE'VE WORKED YEARS FOR THIS MOMENT, LI, HOW CAN YOU SAY NO? I LEAVE IN THE MORNING, YOU HAVE TO COME!
IT'S NOT WITHOUT GREAT DIFFICULTY THAT I HAVE TO DECLINE, BELIEVE ME.
THEN COME WITH ME, WE'LL RULE THIS INDUSTRY.
"WE HAD ALWAYS PLANNED TO START OUR OWN COMPANY ONE DAY-- AND I HAD PROVIDED THAT OPPORTUNITY FOR US IN BEIJING. BUT, LI... HAD OTHER PRIORITIES.
BUT, HANA AND MAYU...
...I CAN'T LEAVE THEM, RENSHU. I'M ALL THEY HAVE.
THE GIRLS?
I... I UNDERSTAND. WHEN THE TIME IS RIGHT, WE WILL COME TO YOU. TRUST IN THAT.
"THAT IS WHEN WE WENT OUR SEPARATE WAYS. AS TIME WORE ON, OUR COMPETITIVE NATURES KICKED IN AS OUR COMPANIES GREW, BUT I WAS NEVER AS RUTHLESS AS HE SUSPECTED. I WOULD NEVER HARM THE MAN FOR MONEY. THERE IS NO HONOR IN SUCH PRACTICES. HOWEVER, THE SAME CANNOT BE SAID FOR ALL OF OUR COMPETITORS.
"YET, I NEVER STOPPED CARING FOR HIM AS A BROTHER..."

...MUCH LIKE HE CARED FOR YOU.
I NEVER... HE DIDN'T SPEAK MUCH OF HIS BUSINESS. I NEVER KNEW HE STAYED BECAUSE OF US.
THERE'S MUCH YOU DON'T KNOW APPARENTLY, INCLUDING INVESTIGATIVE TECHNIQUES. ALLOW ME TO SHOW YOU.
FORTUNATELY, I HAVE ALLOCATED THE CONSIDERABLE RESOURCES AT MY DISPOSAL TO SEARCH FOR LI'S MURDERER, YET MY INSTINCTS TOLD ME THAT I ALREADY KNEW WHERE THE TRAIL WOULD LEAD.
THE MAN IN THE PHOTOGRAPH IS ZHOU KANG. HE OWNS LSK HOLDINGS, THE COMPANY THAT RECENTLY MERGED WITH LI'S OWN CORPORATION. AND HE... HE IS THE ONE RESPONSIBLE FOR... OUR FRIEND'S DEATH.

WHAT? THAT MAKES NO SENSE. IF THEY MERGED THEN WHY KILL YOUR NEW PARTNER?
IT MAKES ALL THE SENSE IN THE WORLD-- IF YOU ARE DRIVEN BY GREED AND POWER, AND NOT BY TRUST, AND HONOR.
AND WHY SHOULD I BELIEVE THIS? *HOW* DO I KNOW YOU'RE NOT MAKING ALL OF IT UP?
YOU DON'T HAVE TO BELIEVE ME. IN TIME, YOU WILL DISCOVER ALL OF IT FOR YOURSELF.
WHAT MAKES YOU SO SURE?
BECAUSE I AM OFFERING YOU THE OPPORTUNITY TO DO JUST THAT.
I DON'T UNDERSTAND.
I WANT YOU TO GO TO WORK FOR ZHOU. I CAN ARRANGE THIS EASY ENOUGH. I WANT YOU TO HELP ME TAKE DOWN HIS CORPORATION... HIS LIVELIHOOD... HIS EXISTENCE, FROM WITHIN. AND NOT FOR MY OWN PERSONAL GAIN, BUT FOR LI. HE DESERVED BETTER.
I AM A FIGHTER NOT A SECRETARY. FIND SOMEONE ELSE TO DO YOUR DIRTY WORK.
I ALREADY HAVE. YOU *BOTH* WILL DO THIS TOGETHER. YOU KNOW HER WELL.
LIEUTENANT NING...

DO WE HAVE HER?
YES, SHE'S HERE NOW.
MAYU... WHAT HAVE YOU DONE?
EITHER THE TWO OF YOU HELP US TAKE DOWN ZHAO... OR REST ASSURED...
...YOUR SISTER WILL NEVER SEE THE OUTSIDE OF A CELL AGAIN.
To Be Continued!
Executive Assistant Assassins #17

CELEBRATING THE FIRST DECADE OF ASPEN COMICS!

ASPEN

EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT ASSASSINS

Jordan GUNDERSON
John BACON
Teodoro GONZALEZ
Josh REED

BLOCKADE ENTERTAINMENT

#17

COVER A

CELEBRATING THE FIRST DECADE OF ASPEN COMICS!

ASPEN

EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT ASSASSINS

Vince HERNANDEZ
Jordan GUNDERSON
John ERCEK
Teodoro GONZALEZ
Josh REED

BLOCKADE ENTERTAINMENT

#17

COVER B

The story so far...

Hana, along with her sister Mayu, have struggled to survive up to this point. Growing up on their own, the pair have begun to drift in opposite paths in their adult lives. However following the murder of their loved one Li, they discovered their connection would forever be intertwined as Mayu's attempted robbery has made them the perfect target for blackmail from a powerful businessman, and his accomplice within the Police Force...

EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT: ASSASSINS

BLOOD ORIGIN

PART 2 OF 3

VINCE HERNANDEZ

JORDAN GUNDERSON
& LORI HANSON (PGS 1 & 5)

JOHN ERCEK

TEODORO GONZALEZ

JOSH REED

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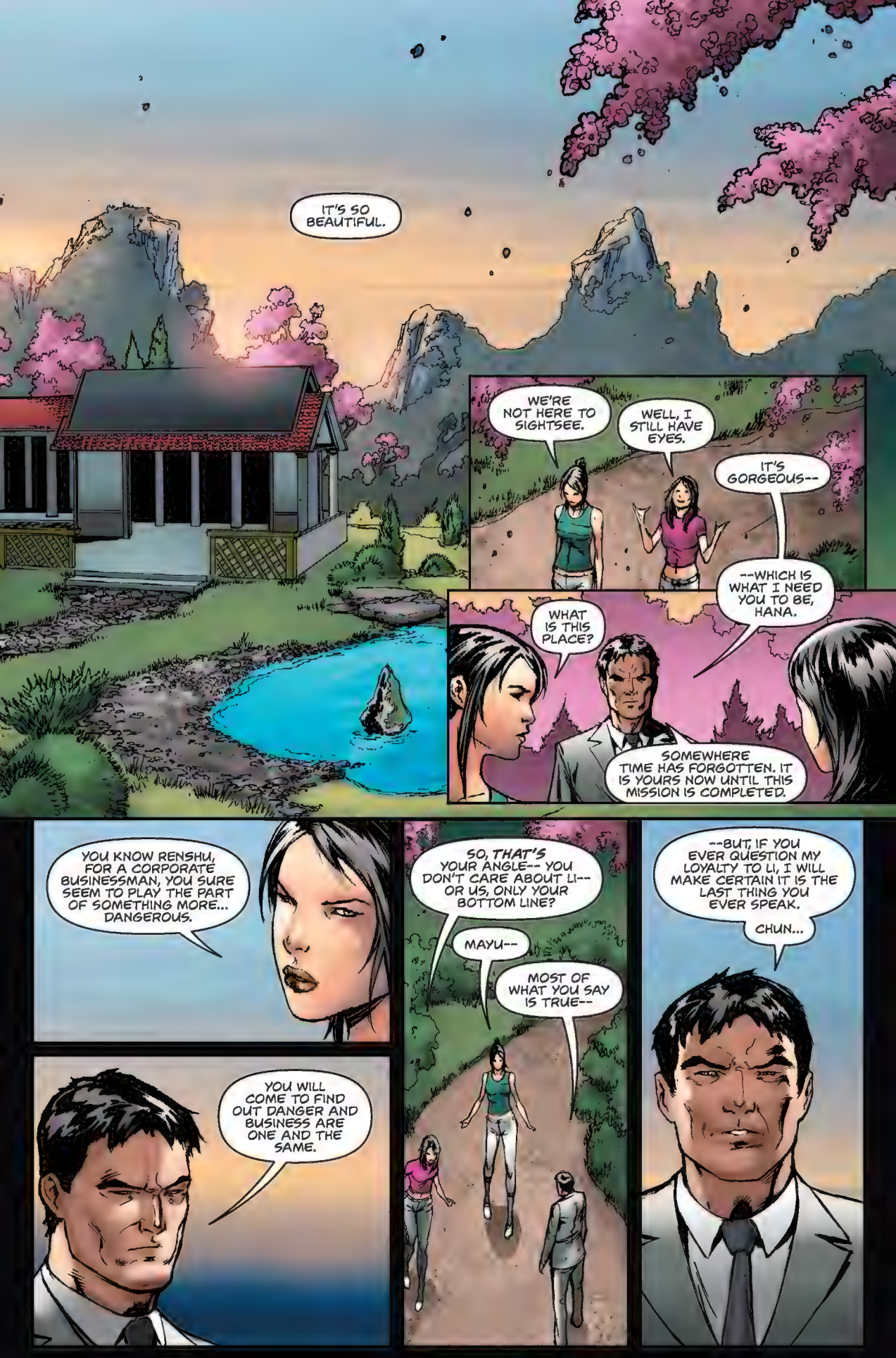
I'VE BEEN IN TROUBLE MANY TIMES IN MY LIFE. I GUESS YOU COULD SAY I STARTED EARLY.
GET BACK HERE!!!
I'LL CUT YOUR HANDS OFF--- TEACH YOU TO STEAL FROM ME!!!
NNNH!
I WAS JUST A FOOLISH CHILD, BUT I WAS CERTAINLY FAST...
BUT, NOT FAST ENOUGH.
I DON'T THINK SO!
AHH!
WHACK
HANA--- GET OUT HERE, NOW!
MY KNEE!
MAYU IS MY BIG SISTER--- AND HAS ALWAYS PROTECTED ME...

NOW, I MUST PROTECT HER.
SMACK
WHEN ARE YOU GOING TO LEARN?
YOU THINK EVERYTHING'S A GAME, WELL, NOW WE'RE IN WAY OVER OUR HEADS.
I'M SORRY, ALRIGHT?
NO-- IT'S NOT. DO YOU UNDERSTAND WHAT'S HAPPENING? IF WE DON'T DO WHAT RENSHU WANTS, YOU'RE GOING AWAY FOR LIFE. AND WHAT DO YOU THINK THEY'LL DO TO ME? DO YOU THINK THEY'LL JUST LET ME WALK? AFTER EVERYTHING I'VE HEARD?
WE CAN RUN AWAY. IT'S WHAT WE ALWAYS DO. ONE OF THE FEW THINGS WE'RE ACTUALLY GOOD AT.
NOT THIS TIME, MAYU. IF HE CAN FORCE THE AUTHORITIES TO RELEASE YOU, THERE'S NO TELLING HOW POWERFUL HE REALLY IS. WE'RE F*#KED.
COME ON. WE HAVE WORK TO DO.


IT'S SO BEAUTIFUL.
WE'RE NOT HERE TO SIGHTSEE.
WELL, I STILL HAVE EYES.
IT'S GORGEOUS--
--WHICH IS WHAT I NEED YOU TO BE, HANA.
WHAT IS THIS PLACE?
SOMEWHERE TIME HAS FORGOTTEN. IT IS YOURS NOW UNTIL THIS MISSION IS COMPLETED.
YOU KNOW RENSHU, FOR A CORPORATE BUSINESSMAN, YOU SURE SEEM TO PLAY THE PART OF SOMETHING MORE... DANGEROUS.
YOU WILL COME TO FIND OUT DANGER AND BUSINESS ARE ONE AND THE SAME.
SO, THAT'S YOUR ANGLE-- YOU DON'T CARE ABOUT LI-- OR US, ONLY YOUR BOTTOM LINE?
MAYU--
MOST OF WHAT YOU SAY IS TRUE--
--BUT, IF YOU EVER QUESTION MY LOYALTY TO LI, I WILL MAKE CERTAIN IT IS THE LAST THING YOU EVER SPEAK.
CHUN...

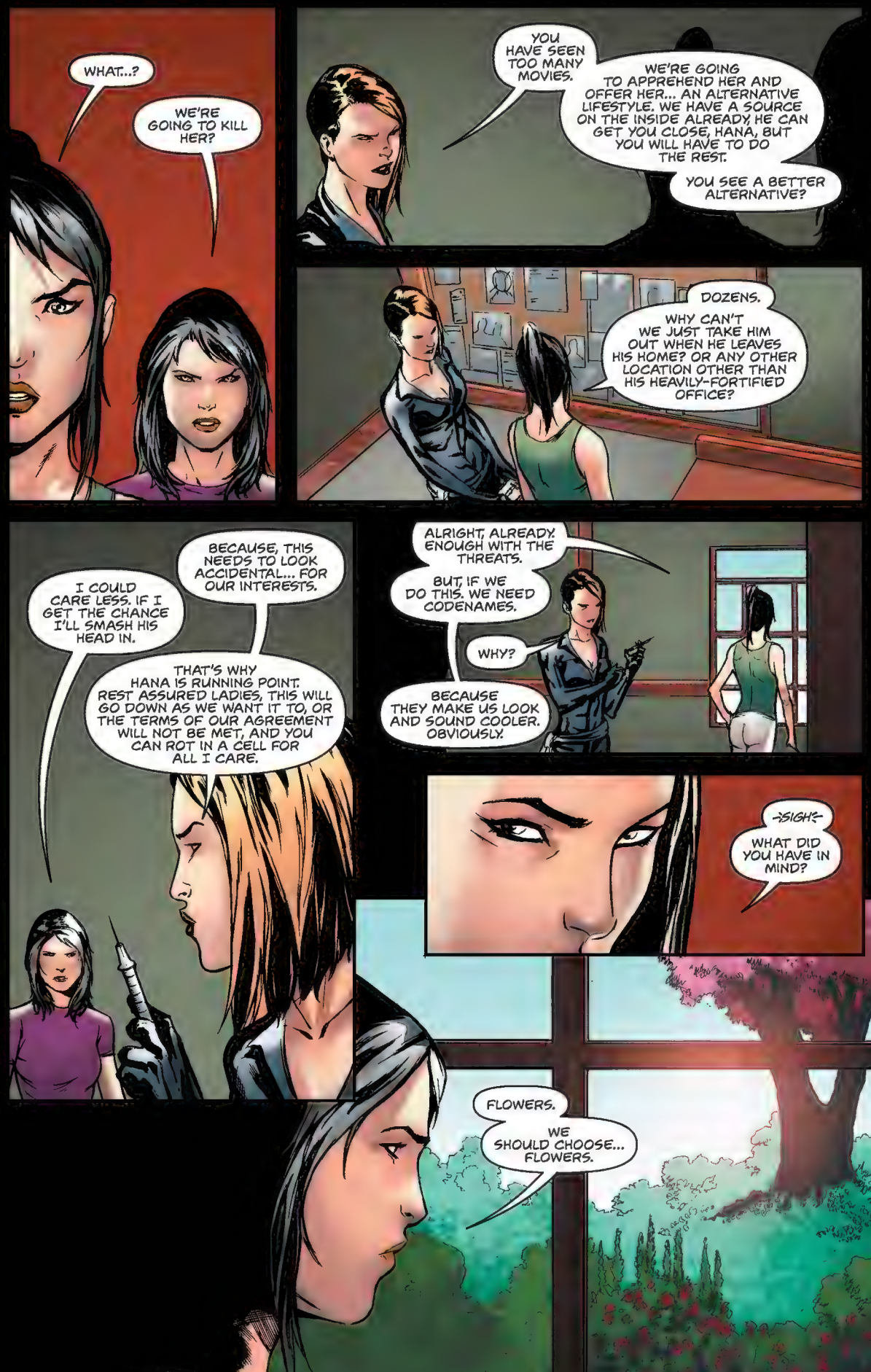
CHUN WILL BE REPORTING TO ME-- MAYU, I HEAR YOU TWO HAVE ALREADY BECOME ACQUAINTED.
RAT BITCH! YOU THINK I'M GOING TO TAKE ORDERS FROM YOU?!
MAYU!
I WAS DOING MY JOB. IF YOU EVER HAD ONE YOU WOULD KNOW THAT IT REQUIRES DUE DILIGENCE.
MAYU-- WOULD YOU STOP FOR A SECOND?!
SHE'S THE REASON WE'RE IN THIS SITUATION! SHE RATTED US OUT!
I GROW TIRED OF YOUR ACCUSATIONS. STOP ACTING LIKE YOU HAVE A CHOICE IN ALL THIS. EITHER YOU LEARN TO PLAY, OR YOU GET LOCKED UP. IT'S YOUR CALL-- DEAL WITH IT.
SO YOU'RE HANA? NOT BAD. RENSHU, SHE WILL WORK NICELY. I HEAR YOU CAN FIGHT?
DEPENDS ON THE PRIZE.
THE PRIZE IS YOUR LIVES. LISTEN TO CHUN. SHE WILL GIVE YOU THE DIRECTIVE.
NOTHING WAS EVER THE SAME AGAIN...

QINGHAI, CHINA. THEN.
...THAT DAY WAS THE END AND THE BEGINNING OF OUR LIVES. WE WERE STILL TOO YOUNG TO UNDERSTAND THE RAMIFICATIONS...
...BUT, WE KNEW WE WERE NOW ALONE.
MAYU BECAME MORE THAN MY SISTER AFTER THAT -- SHE BECAME MY EVERYTHING.
SHE FORCED ME TO EDUCATE MYSELF.
HOW MAYU MADE ENDS MEET FOR THE TWO OF US DURING THAT TIME, I WILL NEVER KNOW. OR MOSTLY -- I DON'T WANT TO KNOW.
YET, WE ALWAYS HAD EACH OTHER.

ALWAYS, EACH OTHER.
YOUR SISTER IS FOOLISH.
FOR TRUSTING YOU?
FOR GETTING YOU IN THIS PREDICAMENT. BELIEVE ME, I DON'T ENVY HAVING TO FORCE YOU GIRLS TO DO SOMETHING AGAINST YOUR WILL.
BUT, YOU WILL ANYWAY.
IT'S NOT A MATTER OF MY MORALS. THIS IS MUCH BIGGER THAN ME...
THIS CITY.. IS OVERRUN WITH CORRUPTION. BUSINESSMEN LIKE ZHOU KANG THINK THEY CAN BUY ANYTHING WITH THEIR INFLUENCE. POLICE. CRIMINALS. IT DOESN'T MATTER TO THEM THE COLLATERAL DAMAGE.
WE ARE THAT COLLATERAL DAMAGE. YOU. ME. OUR LIVES ARE THE ONES FOREVER RUINED. YOU THINK I'M MUCH DIFFERENT FROM YOU, BUT WE ARE NOT THAT FAR APART. I HAVE EXPERIENCED TRAGEDY FIRSTHAND...
...MUCH LIKE YOU.
I HIGHLY DOUBT THAT.
AND HOW IS WHAT YOU ARE DOING TO US ANY DIFFERENT? YOUR MORALITY IS CONVENIENT TO YOUR OWN INTERESTS.
...YES... YOU MAY BE CORRECT. BUT, I AM NOT FOOLISH ENOUGH TO GET CAUGHT.
BELIEVE WHAT YOU WILL. BUT, KNOW THAT I GROW TIRED OF SEEING HONEST PEOPLE SACRIFICED UNDER THE SHADOW OF POWERFUL MEN.

LATER.
IS THAT HIS FAMILY? GREAT, THIS JUST KEEPS GETTING BETTER AND BETTER.
KANG HAS A FAMILY. YES I'M SURE THIS COMES AS A SHOCK TO YOU. MOST MEN GENERALLY DO.
KEEP UP THE SARCASM. REMEMBER, THERE'S STILL TWO OF US RIGHT HERE, RIGHT NOW.
THREATEN ME AGAIN AND THERE WILL ONLY BE TWO OF US IN THE ROOM AFTER I'M THROUGH WITH YOU.
ENOUGH!
MAYU-- SHUT UP! CHUN-- YOU AS WELL.
YOU BOTH BRING UP A GOOD POINT THOUGH...
...THIS IS GOING TO REQUIRE HELP.
OUT OF THE QUESTION.
DO YOU WANT THIS DONE RIGHT?!
OF COURSE!
THEN WORK WITH US-- NOT AGAINST US. WE NEED PEOPLE WE CAN TRUST, AND MORE IMPORTANTLY, ONES THAT WON'T RAISE AN EYEBROW. NO OFFENSE, BUT YOUR PEOPLE ARE NOT EXACTLY STREETWISE.
PLEASE... WE CAN'T DO THIS UNLESS YOU GIVE US SOMETHING... ANYTHING.
...
HOW MANY DID YOU HAVE IN MIND?

WELL, IF THIS ISN'T THE SADDEST GROUP I'VE EVER SEEN.
YOU HAVE NO CLUE WHAT YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT. I'VE MENTORED EACH OF THESE GIRLS MYSELF. I TRUST THEM WITH MY LIFE. THEY HAVE NO STAKE IN THIS FIGHT AND STILL THEY AGREED, FOR MY SAKE.
YOU BRING ME GYM RATS...
...BETTER HOPE YOUR TRUST IS IN THE RIGHT PLACE.
OKAY, THEN, LADIES THIS IS THE TARGET. HANA WILL RUN POINT AS HIS ASSISTANT.
IT LOOKS LIKE HE HAS PLENTY OF ASSISTANTS. HOW WILL ONE MORE BE OF ANY DIFFERENCE?
BECAUSE YOU WILL NOT JUST BE ANY ASSISTANT-- YOU WILL BE HIS EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT.
LIKE MOST MEN, CHUN FANCIES HIMSELF A BRILLIANT ADULTERER. BY THAT, I MEAN HE THINKS THE WIFE IS NONE THE WISER TO HIS EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES.
THE TRUTH IS THE WIFE IS SO DRUGGED BY GREED AND POWER, SHE GOES OUT OF HER WAY NOT TO ASK QUESTIONS.
I GIVE YOU HIS EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT. IN CHARGE OF HIS DAY-TO-DAY OPERATIONS. SHE IS A GORGEOUS WOMAN AS YOU CAN SEE--
--AND WE ARE GOING TO... TAKE HER OUT. HANA YOU WILL MOVE IN AT THAT POINT.


WHAT...?
WE'RE GOING TO KILL HER?
YOU HAVE SEEN TOO MANY MOVIES.
WE'RE GOING TO APPREHEND HER AND OFFER HER... AN ALTERNATIVE LIFESTYLE. WE HAVE A SOURCE ON THE INSIDE ALREADY, HE CAN GET YOU CLOSE, HANA, BUT YOU WILL HAVE TO DO THE REST.
YOU SEE A BETTER ALTERNATIVE?
DOZENS.
WHY CAN'T WE JUST TAKE HIM OUT WHEN HE LEAVES HIS HOME? OR ANY OTHER LOCATION OTHER THAN HIS HEAVILY-FORTIFIED OFFICE?
BECAUSE, THIS NEEDS TO LOOK ACCIDENTAL... FOR OUR INTERESTS.
I COULD CARE LESS. IF I GET THE CHANCE I'LL SMASH HIS HEAD IN.
THAT'S WHY HANA IS RUNNING POINT. REST ASSURED LADIES, THIS WILL GO DOWN AS WE WANT IT TO, OR THE TERMS OF OUR AGREEMENT WILL NOT BE MET, AND YOU CAN ROT IN A CELL FOR ALL I CARE.
ALRIGHT, ALREADY. ENOUGH WITH THE THREATS.
BUT, IF WE DO THIS, WE NEED CODENAMES.
WHY?
BECAUSE THEY MAKE US LOOK AND SOUND COOLER. OBVIOUSLY.
-SIGH-
WHAT DID YOU HAVE IN MIND?
FLOWERS.
WE SHOULD CHOOSE... FLOWERS.

THEN.
DO YOU LIKE FLOWERS? I BROUGHT YOU THIS. IT'S A DAFFODIL.
IT'S... PRETTY. THANK YOU LI.
ONE FLOWER? HAVEN'T YOU EVER HEARD OF A BOUQUET?
ARE YOU MAD I DIDN'T BRING YOU ONE, TOO, MAYU?
PLEASE-- IT'S NOT MY SHORTS YOU'RE TRYING TO GET INTO.
MAYU!
IT'S OKAY. YOUR SISTER IS A WISE ONE.
IS THAT SO?
TECHNICALLY SPEAKING, IT WOULD BE HARD FOR BOTH OF US TO FIT INTO THOSE SHORTS AS TIGHT AS THEY ARE. BUT, IF YOU ARE ASKING IF I'D LIKE TO TAKE YOU OUT SOMETIME, I WOULD SAY YOU'RE NOT FAR OFF THE MARK.
SEE, I CAN SPOT 'EM A MILE AWAY.

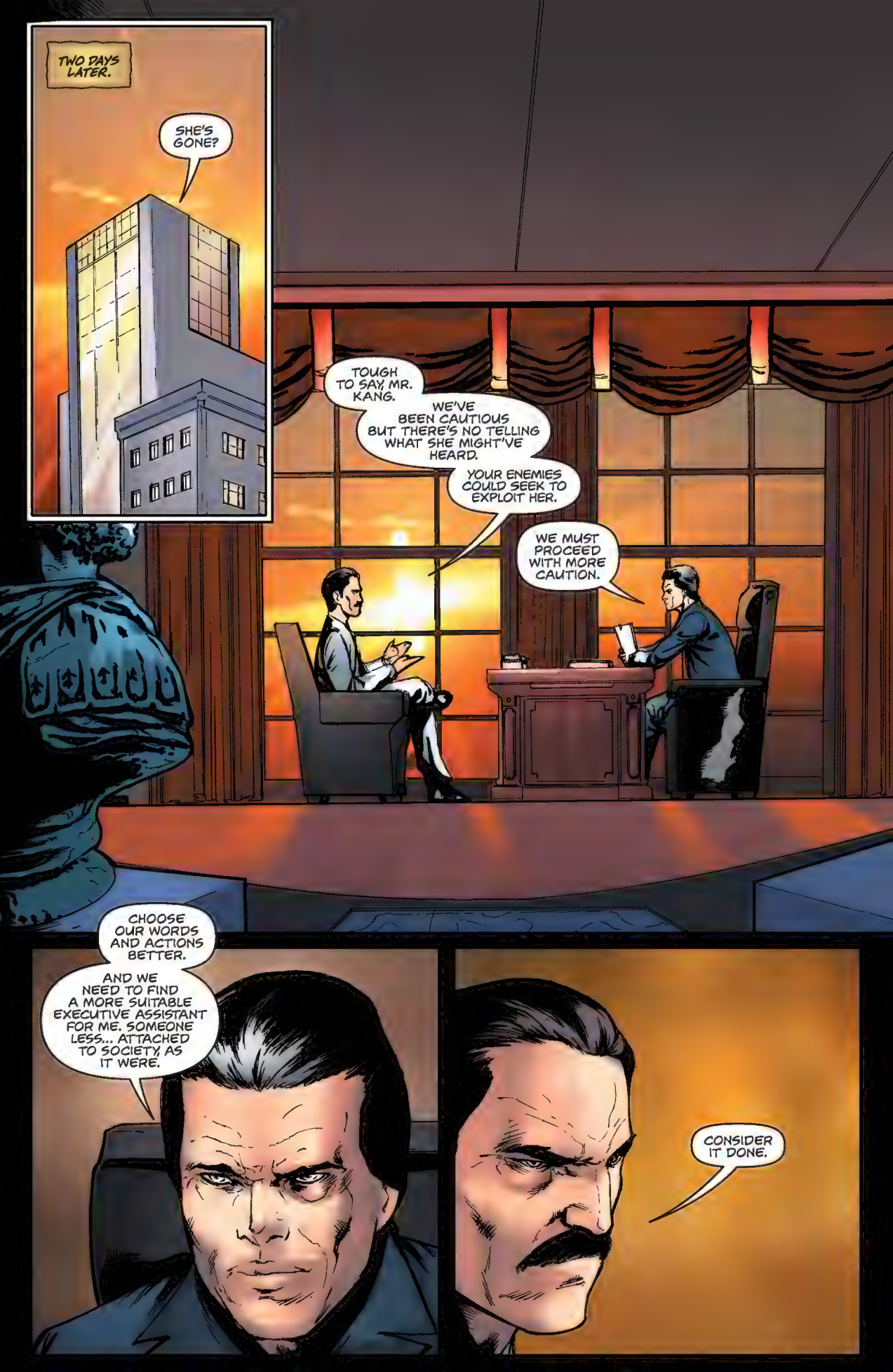
I APOLOGIZE FOR MAYU. SHE'S ALWAYS PLAYING THE ROLE OF BIG SISTER.
DON'T APOLOGIZE. IT'S A BLESSING TO HAVE SOMEONE LOOKING OUT FOR YOU LIKE THAT.
I LOOK OUT FOR *YOU* LIKE THAT.
I NEVER FORGET IT. LOOK, I'M NOT TRYING TO PRESSURE YOU OR ANYTHING. I WOULD NEVER DO THAT. BUT, IF YOU WON'T GIVE ME A SHOT IN THAT WAY, THEN AT LEAST TAKE ME UP ON MY OFFER TO RUN THE GYM?
AHH, I DON'T KNOW LI. I'M NOT A FIGHTER WHAT CAN I TEACH ANYONE?
THAT COULDN'T BE FURTHER FROM THE TRUTH. YOU'RE THE STRONGEST WOMAN I KNOW. YOUR ENTIRE LIFE YOU'VE BEEN FIGHTING-- AND DON'T TRY TO CONVINCE ME OTHERWISE. LOOK, I'VE GOT MY HANDS FULL WITH TOO MANY OTHER BUSINESSES. I NEED SOMEONE I CAN TRUST. YOU'VE ALWAYS BEEN THAT ONE PERSON.
OKAY.
OKAY YOU'LL TAKE THE JOB?
OKAY TO ONE OF THOSE OFFERS... THE OTHER... WE'LL SEE.

NOW.
SO, YOU THINK YOU CAN FIGHT?
FOR A BITCH LIKE YOU, I'M ALWAYS READY.
VERY WELL, THEN.
HNNN!
NOT QUITE.
THUNK

MAYU!
I GOT THIS!
READY FOR ANOTHER?
NNNYA!
SMACK
THUNK
YOU'RE IMPULSIVE. IT WILL BE YOUR UNDOING.
VERY IMPRESSIVE...
...NOW WHY DON'T YOU TRY THAT WITH ME?

READY WHEN YOU ARE.
NNNGH...!
IS THIS A FIGHT OR A DANCE?
HRAAAH!

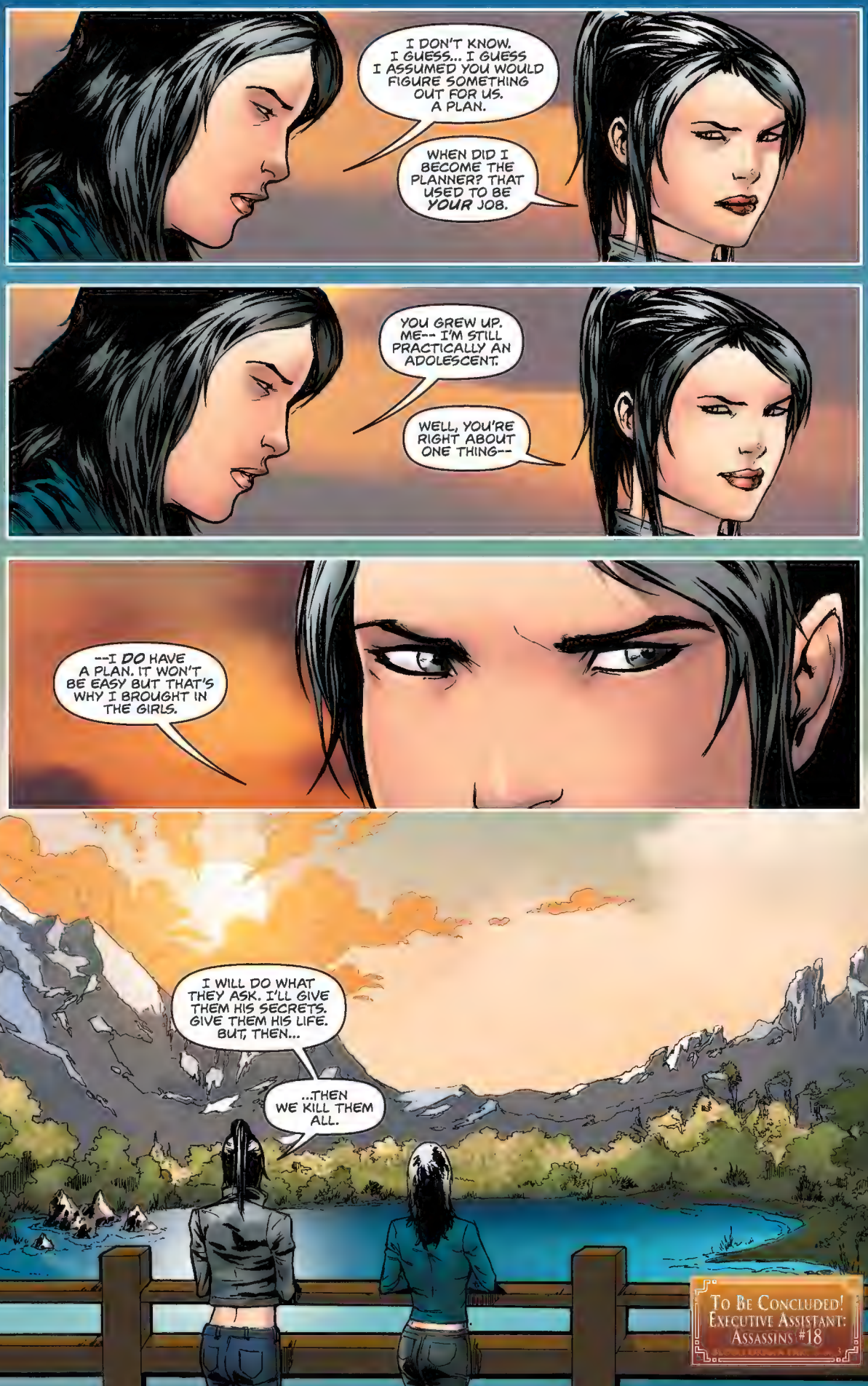
THWACK
BECAUSE I KNOW HOW TO DANCE, TOO.
THUD
THERE. NOW YOU KNOW I CAN FIGHT. WHAT DOES ANY OF THIS HAVE TO DO WITH PLAYING A SECRETARY OR INJECTING KANG IN HIS SLEEP?!
IT HAS EVERYTHING TO DO WITH IT.
YOU GIRLS ARE STRONG, YES. BUT, STRENGTH WILL ONLY GET YOU SO FAR.
YOU NEED DISCIPLINE!


TWO DAYS LATER.
SHE'S GONE?
TOUGH TO SAY, MR. KANG.
WE'VE BEEN CAUTIOUS BUT THERE'S NO TELLING WHAT SHE MIGHT'VE HEARD.
YOUR ENEMIES COULD SEEK TO EXPLOIT HER.
WE MUST PROCEED WITH MORE CAUTION.
CHOOSE OUR WORDS AND ACTIONS BETTER.
AND WE NEED TO FIND A MORE SUITABLE EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT FOR ME. SOMEONE LESS... ATTACHED TO SOCIETY, AS IT WERE.
CONSIDER IT DONE.

I WANT TO KNOW EVERYTHING. HIS SCHEDULE, HIS MEALS, WHAT CARTOONS HIS KIDS F*#KING WATCH. EVERYTHING.
PLEASE...
...WHAT DO YOU WANT FROM ME?!
ARE YOU F*#KING DEAF?! THE WOMAN JUST TOLD YOU WHAT SHE WANTS!
IT'S OKAY.. DANDELION, SHE WILL TALK.
WON'T YOU? LOOK, YOU'RE UNDER ARREST FOR AIDING AND ABETTING IN KANG'S CRIMINAL ENTERPRISE. THE QUESTION NOW IS HOW HELPFUL WILL YOU BE...
...AND HOW MUCH FORCE I WILL NEED TO EXPEL TO GET THAT HELP.

UNDISCLOSED LOCATION.
SO HE'S SUSPICIOUS?
OF COURSE. WOULDN'T YOU BE?
MEN LIKE HIM, THEY ONLY REALLY TRUST THEMSELVES. AND WITH THE HEAT ON HIM NOW HE'S GOTTA BE EXTRA CAREFUL.
ARE YOU SURE SHE WILL BE READY? THIS PLAN SEEMS TO BE A STRETCH-- EVEN FOR YOU. SHE'S WALKING INTO A TRAP, IF YOU ASK ME.
RELAX. SHE IS EAGER TO PROVE HER WORTH... TO ANYONE. I HAD HER PEGGED THE MOMENT I SAW HER.
AND THE SISTER? SHE SEEMS TO BE A WILD CARD.
SHE WILL FALL IN LINE. I'LL MAKE SURE OF IT. WE'LL GET THE RESULTS... OR THEY'LL FAIL. EITHER WAY, THEIR FATE WILL BE THE SAME.

THERE YOU ARE.
THE ASSISTANT GAVE UP EVERYTHING, YOU PUT QUITE THE SCARE INTO HER.
POOR GIRL. SHE HAS NO PLAY IN THIS. IT'S NOT FAIR.
HEY-- IT'S NOT LIKE OUR SITUATION IS ANY BETTER.
THAT'S JUST IT. THIS IS... BAD.
IT COULD BE WORSE. THE SCENERY, THE INTRIGUE. HECK, EVEN CHUN IS STARTING TO SEEM LESS ANNOY--
--THAT'S YOUR PROBLEM! YOU THINK EVERYTHING IS A GAME!
WHAT DO YOU THINK THEY PLAN TO DO WITH US AFTER ALL THIS? YOU THINK THEY'RE GONNA LET US LIVE IN PEACE?


I DON'T KNOW. I GUESS... I GUESS I ASSUMED YOU WOULD FIGURE SOMETHING OUT FOR US. A PLAN.
WHEN DID I BECOME THE PLANNER? THAT USED TO BE YOUR JOB.
YOU GREW UP. ME-- I'M STILL PRACTICALLY AN ADOLESCENT.
WELL, YOU'RE RIGHT ABOUT ONE THING--
--I DO HAVE A PLAN. IT WON'T BE EASY BUT THAT'S WHY I BROUGHT IN THE GIRLS.
I WILL DO WHAT THEY ASK. I'LL GIVE THEM HIS SECRETS. GIVE THEM HIS LIFE. BUT, THEN...
...THEN WE KILL THEM ALL.
To Be Concluded! Executive Assistant: Assassins #18

EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT
ASSASSINS
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Jordan GUNDERSON
John ERCEK
Teo GONZALEZ
Josh REED
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Executive Assistant: Assassins

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Jordan GUNDERSON
John ERCEK
Teo GONZALEZ
Josh REED

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#18
Cover B

The story so far...

With no alternative, Hana is left with no choice but to accept Renshu's offer to free her sister from incarceration, in exchange for her services in infiltrating Zhou Kang's corporate infrastructure. However, upon training with his assistant, Chun, the pair soon realized their bosses' plan will never allow for their freedom. And Hana began to hatch a plot of her own.

The Executive Assistant: Assassins

BLOOD ORIGINS

PART 3 OF 3

VINCE HERNANDEZ

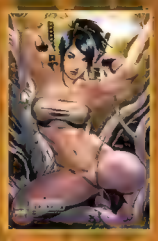
JORDAN GUNDERSON

DIGITAL INKS

JOHN ERCEK

TEODORO GONZALEZ

JOSH REED



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QINGHAI, CHINA.
THREE YEARS AGO.
THIS IS THE END..
...THAT WAS MY FIRST THOUGHT, WHEN I SAW MAYU PAYING FOR HER PAST. I KNEW WHAT THEY WANTED-- MONEY. IT'S WHAT THEY ALWAYS WANTED.
I THOUGHT THIS WAS FINALLY IT. SHE WENT TOO FAR. AND PART OF ME ALWAYS THOUGHT IT WOULD END LIKE THIS. WHY DIE WITH HONOR WHEN OUR LIVES HAVE SEEN EVERYTHING BUT?
YET, THE LIFE WE LED-- IT GAVE US STRENGTH AS WELL. AND NEAR FOOLISH RESOLVE...
HEY!
HNNH?
THUNK
KRAAK
C'MON. I'M SURE YOU REMEMBER HOW TO RUN.
...IT'S THAT SAME FOOLISH RESOLVE...

QINGHAI, CHINA. NOW.
...THAT HAS FOUND ME IN THIS SITUATION.
THE END RESULT OF OUR HARD WORK TRYING TO INFILTRATE ZHOU KANG'S BUSINESS. ME IN A F%#KING BUSINESS SUIT.
DAFFODIL, IS IT?
SHE'S CLEAN.
AND SO IS YOUR RESUME. ALMOST TOO PERFECT. AND I APOLOGIZE FOR THE TIGHT SECURITY, BUT MY LIFE HAS BEEN THREATENED RECENTLY.
I MUST TAKE ADEQUATE PRECAUTION.
I AM SORRY TO HEAR THAT, MR. KANG.
YOU MAY CALL ME ZHOU.
MY LAST EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT, SHE... HAS GONE MISSING. WE FEAR THE WORST.
YOU SHOULD.
I AM SORRY TO HEAR THAT.
YOU SHOULD BE. IT IS FOR THAT REASON THAT I DO NOT FOLLOW SUIT SO EASILY WITH YOU. DO YOU THINK ME A FOOL? THAT I DON'T KNOW WHAT'S REALLY GOING ON HERE?
MY GUARDS ADVISED AGAINST EVEN BRINGING YOU UP HERE, BUT I WANTED TO SEE YOUR FACE FOR MYSELF. THAT RENSHU WOULD SEND A WOMAN IS PROOF OF THE HONOR HE LACKS.
I... UH--
GRAB HER!
THIS WORKED LIKE A CHARM.
...WAS COUNTING ON IT.

-HNNNH!-
AHHHH!
NO--- WAIT!
BANG
BANG
SORRY--- YOU DIDN'T DESERVE TO DIE FOR HIM.
WHAT HAVE YOU--

BANG
--GAH!
THIS WASN'T PART OF THE OBJECTIVE. RENSHU WANTED ME TO WORK FOR ZHOU AND FEED HIM INTEL. CHUN SPENT WEEKS TRYING TO ACCUSTOM ME TO A LIFE AS A HIGH-END SECRETARY. THAT WAS TO BE THE PLAN.
I CHOSE A DIFFERENT ONE.
IT WAS YOU THAT KILLED LI? AM I RIGHT? ANSWER ME!
DON'T SHOOT!
EITHER YOU TELL ME THE TRUTH... OR SO HELP ME, I WILL UNLOAD THIS CHAMBER INTO YOUR BRAIN!
TELL ME!!!
YES!
I ORDERED HIS MURDER! I HIRED THE ASSASSIN-- BUT IT WAS NOT MY DECISION! YOU MUST LISTEN TO ME!
I'M LISTENING. SPEAK. NOW!

THEN.
MY LIFE HAS NEVER GONE ACCORDING TO PLAN.
CAN YOU SEE IT, LI? IT'S AMAZING.
IT'S A TAD... RUNDOWN.
OF COURSE IT IS, THAT'S HOW I GOT IT SO CHEAP.
BUT, THE WORK--
--IT'LL BE FUN. BESIDES, THE DIRT GIVES IT CHARACTER. LIKE ME.
WELL, YOU ARE FAIRLY DIRTY.
A$$HOLE! SHUT UP.
BUT, SERIOUSLY-- IT'S GONNA BE GREAT. TRUST ME. I JUST WISH YOU WERE GOING TO BE AROUND TO SEE IT.
...
WHAT IS IT?
HANA...REMEMBER THE JOB OFFER I TOLD YOU ABOUT WITH RENSHU? I'VE... I'VE DECIDED NOT TO TAKE IT. I'VE DECIDED TO GO TO SEOUL.
I THOUGHT YOU WERE ALL SET. READY TO GO WITH RENSHU. WHAT HAPPENED?
I'VE... UH... I'VE MET SOMEONE, HANA.
...OH.
HE DIDN'T HAVE TO SAY ANYTHING MORE. I WAS SHATTERED. HE WOULD LATER RETURN... BUT HE WAS NEVER THE SAME. I NEVER ASKED HIM ABOUT HER. MAYBE BECAUSE I DIDN'T WANT TO KNOW THE ANSWER.

NOW.
KANG TURNED OUT TO BE A COWARD, BUT I GOT WHAT I NEEDED IN THE END. NOW, I KNOW WHO'S TRULY RESPONSIBLE.
--THE MYSTERIOUS MURDER OF L.S.K. HOLDINGS C.E.O. AND FIGUREHEAD, ZHOU KANG, FOLLOWING THE RECENT DEATH OF QSS OWNER AND C.E.O LI SUN HAS CALLED INTO QUESTION THE RECENT MERGER OF--
--BOTH CORPORATIONS, AND THEIR FUTURE STAKE IN THE MARKET. MORE DETAILS OF THE GRISLY MURDER SCENE AFTER THE BREAK.
I THOUGHT OUR LEVERAGE WAS SUFFICIENT. HOW DID THIS HAPPEN?
ALL THIS TIME, I WAS CONCERNED ABOUT THE OLDER SISTER. IT WAS HER THAT WAS PLAYING US ALL ALONG.
US? MORE LIKE YOU. YOU HAD ONE SIMPLE TASK-- KEEP THE WOMEN IN LINE. WE HOLD THEIR FUTURES--
--WE STILL DO. I'LL HANDLE IT. I STILL HAVE HER SISTER HERE-- AND THE REST OF THEM.
NO. I'LL TAKE CARE OF THIS MYSELF. YOU JUST MAKE SURE THAT YOU ALL STAY PUT UNTIL I ARRIVE.

RENSHU IS NO FOOL. AS SOON AS HE FOUND OUT WHAT HAPPENED, HIS ONLY OPTION WAS OBVIOUS.
I JUST HOPE MAYU GOT THE GIRLS OUT IN TIME.
MAYU.
HNNH!

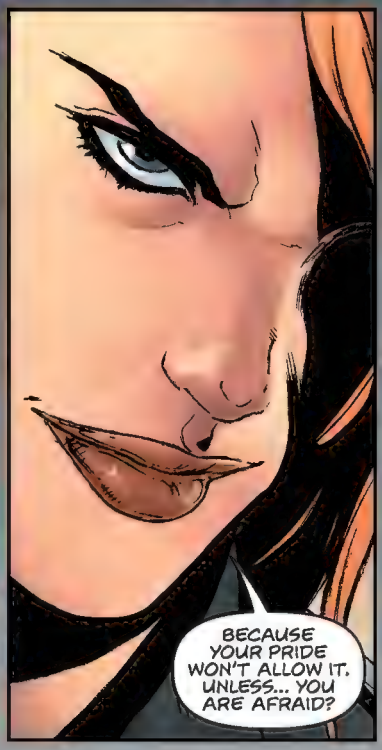
MAYU!
CLICK
HANA...
RENSHU!
...YOU THOUGHT YOU BOTH WOULD GET AWAY?
I RESCUED HER FROM A CELL. GAVE YOU PRIVILEGED INFORMATION. BUT, IT CAME WITH A PRICE-- YOU KNEW THAT.
YOU KILLED HER FOR IT?!
THAT WAS THE PRICE! NOW, PUT THE GUN DOWN AND I MAY LET YOU LIVE.
LIAR, LIKE HELL YOU WILL!
BANG

WHAT..?
I GUESS I COULD'VE WAITED FOR YOU TWO TO TAKE YOUR SHOTS...
...BUT, I WANTED THE PLEASURE OF KILLING YOU BOTH MYSELF.
CHUN!?
I DON'T... I DON'T UNDERSTAND?!
YOU WOULDN'T.
RENSHU WAS NOT MY BOSS. HE WAS AN ALLY. SOMEONE WHO SHARED A MUTUAL OBJECTIVE. BUT, MAKE NO MISTAKE-- I DON'T *NEED* EITHER OF YOU ANYMORE. I GOT WHAT I WANTED. NOW, LI WILL FOREVER REST IN PEACE.
YOU... *YOU* WERE THE OTHER WOMAN.

I WAS THE ONLY WOMAN! HIS FIANCÉ-- UNTIL HIS GUILT OVER LEAVING WITH ME WAS TOO MUCH FOR HIM. HE MAY HAVE LEFT ME TO RETURN TO THIS DESOLATE TOWN, TO YOU-- BUT I NEVER STOPPED CARING FOR HIM.
HE MAY HAVE LOVED YOU BOTH LIKE SISTERS-- BUT I WAS THE ONE WHO SHARED HIS BED!
SO YOU USED US TO GET TO HIS KILLER. AND RENSHU IN THE PROCESS. THAT'S VERY AMBITIOUS.
I AM AN AMBITIOUS WOMAN-- IT'S WHAT LI LOVED ABOUT ME. YOU FANCY YOURSELF A PERSON WHO HAS COME FROM NOTHING. BUT, TRY HAVING IT ALL AND LOSING EVERYTHING! YOU KNOW NOTHING OF SACRIFICE.
AT LEAST I HAVE HONOR. YOU WANT TO KILL ME. GO AHEAD. I'D RATHER DIE WITH COURAGE THAN BE LIKE YOU. MY LIFE HAS NEVER HELD MUCH WORTH ANYWAY.
YOU THINK I WON'T PULL THE TRIGGER BECAUSE YOU QUESTIONED MY HONOR?

COME, SHOW ME HOW MUCH HONOR YOU HAVE. DROP THE WEAPON. I WON'T NEED MINE TO TAKE YOU OUT.

WASN'T EXPECTING THAT.
WHAT MAKES YOU THINK I WON'T SHOOT? YOU GAVE ME THE TACTICAL ADVANTAGE.


BECAUSE YOUR PRIDE WON'T ALLOW IT. UNLESS... YOU ARE AFRAID?

I KNEW BETTER.
BUT, WHAT DID IT MATTER ANYMORE WITH MAYU GONE?
WHEN WE SPARRED LAST-- YOU SAID I LACKED DISCIPLINE. YET, IT WAS DISCIPLINE THAT STOPPED ME FROM KILLING YOU THEN--
--I SHOULD'VE FINISHED YOU WHEN I HAD THE CHANCE!
THUD
SMACK

WHUNK
YOU'RE JUST A BRAWLER! YOU HAVE NO SKILL. EVERYTHING YOU DO IS FUELED BY RAGE.
LI MAY HAVE LOVED YOU BUT I AM BETTER THAN YOU IN EVERY WAY. WHEN HE WAS MURDERED, I BECAME SOMETHING MORE!
YOU'RE WRONG.
I MAY BE NOTHING, BUT I DO HAVE ONE SKILL--
--I KNOW HOW TO SURVIVE!

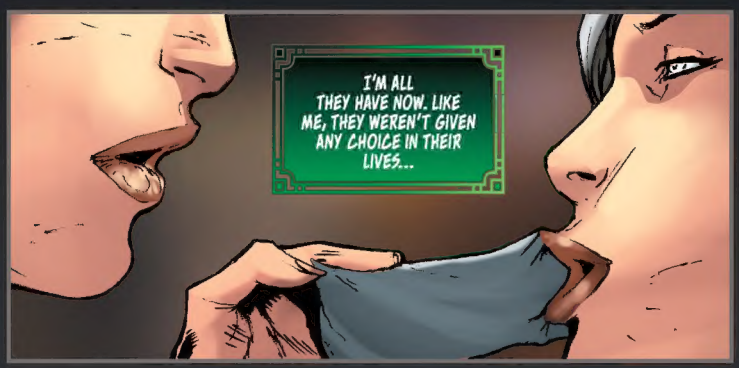
SURVIVE-- OR DIE TRYING.
SHE MAY HAVE TRULY LOVED LI-- BUT HE LOVED ME. I KNOW IT NOW. IT'S WHY SHE HATES ME SO MUCH.
IT'S A PAINFUL REVELATION, HOWEVER.
MAYBE THIS WAS ALWAYS HOW I WAS MEANT TO GO OUT.

YOU SHOULD HAVE DONE YOUR DUTY, IT MAY HAVE SPARED YOUR LIFE A LITTLE LONGER...
...AND YOUR SISTER'S LIFE AS WELL.
WRONG CHOICE OF WORDS, BITCH.
THUNK

COUGH!
YOU TALK TOO MUCH, CHUN! THAT'S NNNGH YOUR PROBLEM!
KRAACK
FOR MAYU... AND LI.
THAT SOUND...
...IS THE END.

...OR THE BEGINNING?

THE GIRLS PROVED TO BE A USEFUL DISTRACTION TO BUY ME TIME, BUT THEY ARE NOT READY FOR THE REAL WORLD OUT THERE.


I'M ALL THEY HAVE NOW. LIKE ME, THEY WEREN'T GIVEN ANY CHOICE IN THEIR LIVES...

MONTHS LATER.
...I WILL GIVE THEM A CHOICE.
OUT THERE YOU WILL NEED DISCIPLINE. BUT, YOUR INSTINCTS WILL GUIDE YOU. TRUST THEM--- AND YOU WILL ALWAYS HAVE THE ADVANTAGE.
YOU WILL BE LOYAL BUT NEVER TRUSTING...

WHAT CAN NEVER BE REPLACED. MY FATHER. LI... MAYU... ALL OF THEM, TAKEN FROM ME.
YET, WHILE EVERYTHING WAS LOST...
...A SEED BEGAN TO GROW. I KNOW WHAT I AM GOOD AT FOR ONCE. I KNOW NOT ONLY HOW TO SURVIVE BUT HOW TO THRIVE.
I MAY HAVE LOST EVERYTHING...
...BUT I HAVE SET IN MOTION SOMETHING FAR GREATER.

NOW, I HAVE PURPOSE.

THE END.
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